

Commentary

Volume Fifty-four, Number Two, August 1972

The World of the 70's

Walter Laqueur

On the Love of Suicide • Renee Winegarten

Encyclopaedia Judaica • Chaim Raphael

Blue in Chicago • Bette Howland

Beauvoir's Last Revolt • Edward Grossman

Dr. Coles among the Poor • Joseph Epstein

Books in Review

Rudolf Klein on Michael Harrington

Walter Goodman on the Fortas Case

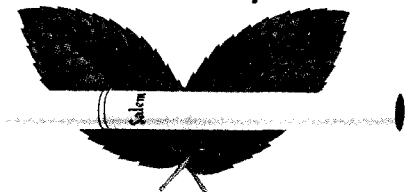
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Kathleen Nott on Hannah Arendt

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COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is \$1.00; \$10 a year; 3 years \$27; 5 years \$39.50—Add \$1.50 per year for foreign postage charges—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Copyright © 1972 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts, and America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

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Letters from Readers

The Franklin Case

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although I was pleased to see Herbert L. Packer's reference to my article in the *New York Times Magazine* about the Bruce Franklin tenure case at Stanford, I am afraid I find Mr. Packer's article ["Academic Freedom and the Franklin Case," April] to be little more than a post-mortem brief for the prosecution, and one that is seriously flawed in some important details.

Mr. Packer dismisses Franklin's performance as a teacher with the words "incompetent" and "bizarre." This is a judgment quite at odds with all other reports I have heard, including statements made to me both by students and by Franklin's colleagues in the English department. If, indeed, Franklin was incompetent as a teacher, it was surely the best-kept secret of this protracted and vigorously argued case.

Furthermore, Mr. Packer's eagerness to imply that Franklin was responsible for the "trashings," the arson, the fire-bombings, and the shootings on the Stanford campus since 1967 ill becomes a professor of law. Stanford has certainly been plagued by serious acts of vandalism, and worse, and Bruce Franklin was certainly an obstreperous influence on campus, but it has not been demonstrated in a court of law, or anywhere else, that Franklin was directly or indirectly responsible for any of these criminal acts.

My objection to the action of the faculty board and whatever sympathy I have for Bruce Franklin grow out of two aspects of the case that Mr. Packer deftly manages to sidestep.

First, the charges which were sustained by the faculty board and for which Franklin was fired involved behavior that can reasonably be argued to fall under the protection of the First Amendment. Readers of Mr. Packer's article should know that on March 9 the Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California voted unanimously to help Franklin contest the decision in the civil courts. The ACLU's action was based on the argument that the speeches at issue were within the legitimate bounds of political advocacy.

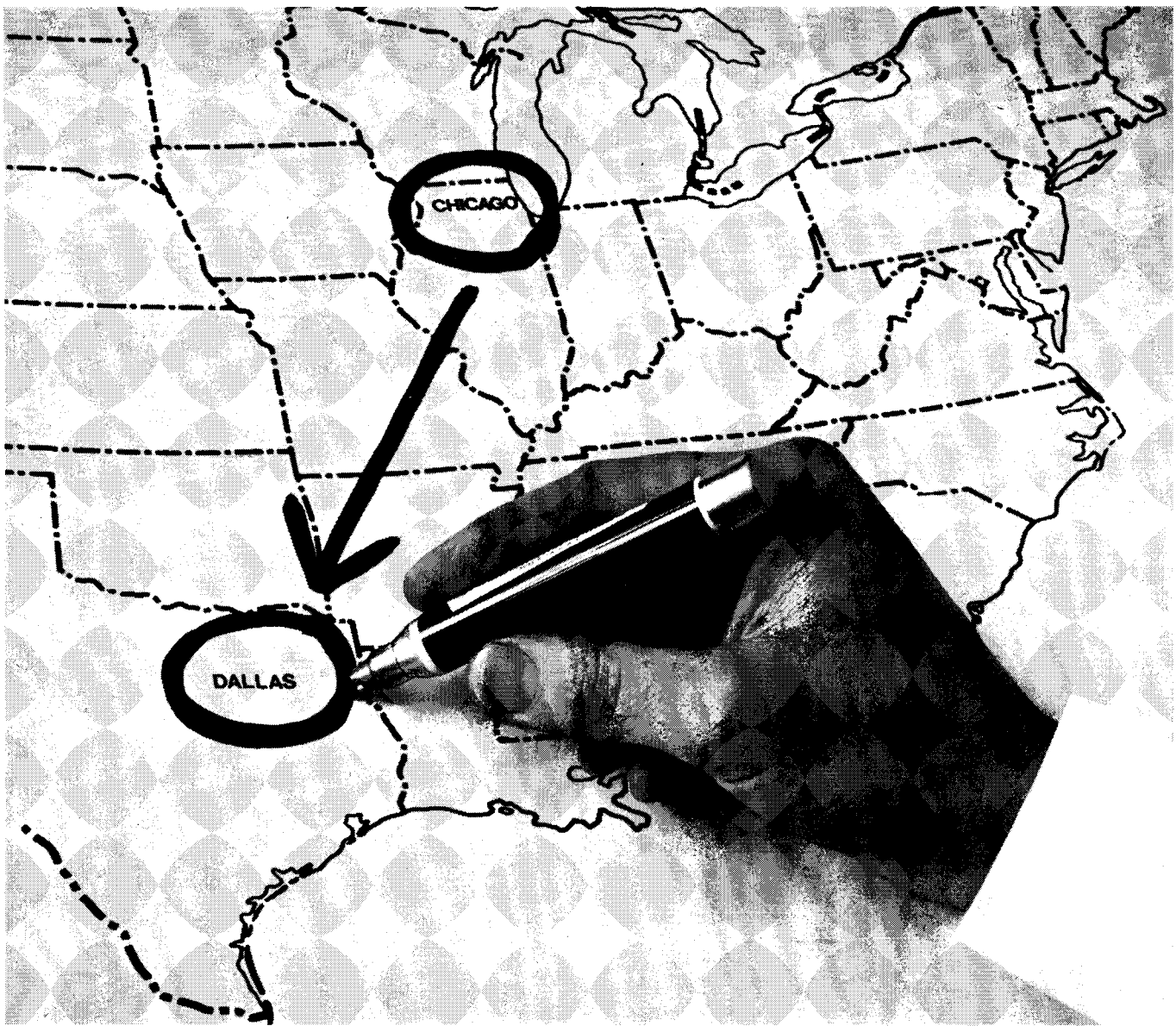
As the organization's newsletter reported, "The Board was convinced that Franklin was terminated only because Stanford felt that his speeches were effective; i.e., persons in the audience allegedly acted on the proposals he discussed. They noted that, contrary to news reports and rumor, Franklin was charged with no acts of violence against person or property. Although charged with having disrupted a speech by Henry Cabot Lodge, he was acquitted of any such act. What Franklin was discharged for were the opinions he expressed as to appropriate action by which the Stanford community could protest the U.S. invasion of Laos. . . ."

Finally, I am prepared to go further than the ACLU and say that it seems clear to me that Franklin was dismissed not so much for what he said in the course of the disputed speeches as simply for being the difficult and embarrassing person he was. Mr. Packer comes close to defending this point and this seriously disturbs me, for if this doctrine is to be accepted generally, here is surely a real and pressing threat to academic freedom everywhere.

KENNETH LAMOTT
Tiburon, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have no direct knowledge of the Franklin case, but I find Herbert L. Packer's argument internally unpersuasive. Mr. Packer quotes approvingly the Stanford Advisory Board's statement that there is an "institutional decision that while those further toward the center of the political spectrum may practice what they preach, those at its extremes may preach but are limited in their practice." This must be the case, the Board argues, because "any evenhanded balancing of rights," however desirable in itself, would have an untenable cost in reducing the character of the university as "an institution in which independent initiative from many quarters can have the widest possible play." In short, there are two partly incompatible values to be reconciled through judicious balancing: the openness of the university to the expression of diverse viewpoints, including radical and unpopular ones; and the protection of this very openness against radical members of the uni-



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versity who do not believe in it themselves, and use their freedom as an opportunity to undermine it.

If this is the standard to be applied in judging Stanford's action in the Franklin case, as Mr. Packer seems to advocate, then certain facts on which he dwells—for example, that Franklin changed his course title to "Melville and Marx," that he kept a gun, that he advocated disrupting the classes of the members of the Advisory Board—are irrelevant. The Advisory Board was presumably applying its own values and not Professor Franklin's. The fact that Franklin does not believe in free speech for his enemies does not mean that they should not believe in free speech for him—"up to a certain point."

What is that point? Here is where the wisdom of the Advisory Board was tested and where, it seems to me, judging from Mr. Packer's account, it was wanting. Just how dangerous was Professor Franklin? Mr. Packer several times uses the word "charismatic," as if to suggest that Professor Franklin's "incitement" alone caused demonstrations and violence on the Stanford campus. Has Mr. Packer forgotten the Vietnam war, the Cambodian incursion, the invasion of Laos, the resulting nationwide anti-war movement which made itself felt on so many campuses? Without questioning the Board's finding that Franklin incited certain specific crowd actions during two campus demonstrations, and without agreeing with Franklin's reported views, one may certainly question whether the dismissal of this one radical professor was so essential to the freedom of speech of the liberal Stanford faculty majority that it justifies the loss of a challenging and heterodox voice. It would have been extraordinary if Franklin had really been so uniquely dangerous, and one would have expected Mr. Packer to make the point explicitly and with some persuasive evidence. Since he doesn't, one is left wondering whether Mr. Packer is not too frightened by Franklin's beliefs to consider calmly the relative costs and benefits of firing him.

ANDREW J. NATHAN

Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Anyone concerned about civil liberties must look with suspicion upon an article that begins by as-

serting that a university's decision to fire a tenured professor for his public speeches has actually "advanced" the causes of "free speech on campus, of academic freedom, and of civil liberties. . . ." This kind of exaggerated reverse logic is typical of an advocate's brief, and that is precisely what Herbert L. Packer's article on the Franklin case is. I was indeed surprised to see that COMMENTARY had failed to identify Mr. Packer more precisely than as a professor of law at Stanford: he was Vice Provost of the university during the early student disturbances; he has long been a close adviser to President Lyman (who instituted charges against Franklin); and he participated in the Franklin case itself by filing a brief urging the Advisory Board to disregard a brief *amicus curiae* filed by the American Civil Liberties Union. (At this point let me identify myself more precisely: I represented the ACLU in the Franklin case, and participated in drafting its brief; but then I have not written an article purporting to present a disinterested account of a case in which I had participated as an advocate.)

Mr. Packer's bias creeps into his article on virtually every page. In discussing the counsel situation, he says:

The University was represented during the hearings by a young lawyer from Los Angeles who was a recent graduate of the Stanford Law School. Professor Franklin was represented before the hearing by a San Francisco law firm. He chose during the hearings to conduct his own defense. [Emphasis added.]

There is so much distortion in those three sentences that it is difficult to know where to begin: 1) Stanford was represented by three outside lawyers from a leading Los Angeles firm (Tuttle & Taylor, which has approximately twenty lawyers) and its own university lawyer. Three of these lawyers devoted their full time to the case. Stanford's legal fees—exclusive of the salary of its own lawyer—came to more than \$50,000. 2) The so-called "San Francisco law firm" that Mr. Packer says represented Franklin consists of three young attorneys, one of whom was incapacitated with a serious back injury, another of whom was handling a case in Europe during the actual proceedings, and the third of whom had nothing to do with the Franklin case. But the most

serious misstatement is Mr. Packer's claim that Franklin "chose during the hearing to conduct his own defense." The truth is that Franklin ran out of money before the hearing began; his pre-trial legal fees came to \$3,000, and he requested the university to provide him with funds to retain counsel on the ground that he was "personally unable to pay the expenses of fees of counsel for this litigation"; but this request was refused. Franklin tried desperately to obtain counsel. (He did "choose" to play an active role in his own representation, but he did want a lawyer to represent him as well.) I know this for a fact because he pleaded with me to represent him (which I could not do because of the terms of my fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study). He asked at least one member of the Stanford Law School faculty to represent him. And a written request for legal assistance was placed in the box of every member of that faculty. In the end, Franklin was forced to represent himself not because he "chose" to, but because Stanford denied him the funds to retain counsel, and because no one in the Stanford community was willing to come forward to serve as counsel. Did this also "advance" the cause of civil liberties? (Franklin did have the uncompensated, part-time assistance of Joel Klein, a recent Harvard Law School graduate working with me at the Center. Klein—who is not yet admitted to any bar, had never participated in any case, and was employed full time in other pursuits—assisted only in the preparation and presentation of legal motions.)

Mr. Packer correctly describes Franklin as an "apologist for violence" and as one who "lent his prestige" to those who would engage in violence; he argues that Franklin's speeches calling for students to "shut down" the computation center and to wage a "people's war" had a "significant effect" in moving the crowd to illegal action. I agree that Franklin did all of these things (and that he should be condemned for doing them). But these are all a far cry from illegal incitement. Indeed, the Supreme Court in *Brandenburg v. Ohio*—the case that Mr. Packer says the Board followed—focused on language precisely parallel to Mr. Packer's characterizations of Franklin's speeches in striking down the statute at issue in that



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case: the unconstitutional Ohio statute would have punished those who "justify the commission of violent acts with intent to exemplify, spread, or advocate the propriety of [violence]. . ." (emphasis added). This is just what Mr. Packer says Franklin did, and it is indeed what he did do. But that is not incitement. Franklin advocated actions; he offered up ideas for acceptance or rejection. His ideas were obnoxious and dangerous; they certainly increased the likelihood of violence; but it is precisely these kinds of ideas that the First Amendment was designed to protect.

The Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California—an organization which, despite Joseph W. Bishop's criticisms ["Politics & ACLU," December 1971], is a neutral protector of free speech—analyzed each of Franklin's speeches in detail and unanimously concluded that none of them constituted an unlawful incitement. (The ACLU has decided, therefore, to file suit against Stanford seeking Franklin's reinstatement.) Franklin's first speech advocated shutting down the computation center; it did not specify how it should be shut down (by lawful or unlawful means), nor when. In fact, Franklin's speech was not followed by immediate unlawful action: it was followed by a vote. There was then another meeting by those who occupied the computation center at which it was decided what to do. Franklin did not even attend that meeting, nor did he participate in the actual occupation.

The second speech was a statement by Franklin protesting a police order to disperse from in front of the computation center and denying the legality of the order. The legality of the police order was, in fact, questionable, since the building had already been cleared and the demonstrators—who were concededly orderly—were separated from the building by a police barricade. Franklin's actions may have contributed to the unlawful police behavior that followed. ("The police line charged, dispersing the crowd with arrests and minor injuries to some persons"—Board Report.) But that surely does not strip his actions of constitutional safeguard. It would be a sorry Constitution which failed to protect statements that increased the risk of violence to an

audience by angering the police into unlawful conduct.

The third speech was a vague call by Franklin to engage in "the methods of people's war." He elaborated by "telling people that people's war meant that they should go back to the dormitories, organize people into small groups, and talk with them, or play football, or whatever, as late into the night as possible" (Board Report). It must have been the "or whatever" that was found to be an unlawful incitement. This charge is absurd on its face, especially when it is realized that Franklin's statement was made in the context of the general theme of his speeches that night that trashing and other "militant action in large groups would be suicidal, given the number of police on campus" (Board Report).

It could, of course, be argued—as Mr. Packer did argue in his brief—that a faculty member may be fired for making speeches that could not, under the Constitution, subject him to criminal penalties. Surely, such an argument would have plausibility in non-speech contexts: a professor should be subject to firing if he has engaged in plagiarism or other forms of cheating, even though these may not be crimes. But a double standard has no validity in the context of public speeches. It would be intolerable to permit less free speech on a university campus than on a public street. Yet this is the plain implication of the double standard suggested by Mr. Packer.

Mr. Packer's discussion of me is just plain silly. He faults me for expressing the judgment that the Franklin decision will have "a chilling and deterrent effect on what professors think they can say to mass audiences in situations that may be inflammatory." He argues that since I am "well known professionally for [my] skepticism . . . about predictions of anti-social behavior as, for example, in laws regarding preventive detention," it is, therefore, incumbent on me to eschew "prediction about the consequences of the Franklin decision." But surely Mr. Packer must understand that there is an enormous difference between locking up an *individual* on the basis of a prediction that he may commit a *specific* act, and criticizing a decision on the basis of a judgment that *some* professors in *some* universities may be deterred from making *some* constitutionally-pro-

tected speeches. The dangerous precedent embodied in the Franklin decision will lie about like a loaded weapon ready to be picked up and used by any university administration, board of regents, or state legislature wanting to rid itself of uncomfortable radicals. And there are many universities far less committed to the causes of academic freedom—or far less able to resist the pressures of alumni and legislatures—than Stanford.

Bruce Franklin's political views are despicable to me. I firmly believe that he is a dangerous person. I sincerely hope that he fails in his goals, and I will do everything I can—consistent with the Constitution—to see that his ideas are rejected in the free marketplace of ideas. But his right to advocate his program—even one that rests on violence—must be protected. Stanford's failure to protect this right did not "advance" the causes of free speech, academic freedom, and civil liberties. It retarded them; and in doing so, it contributed to the general contradiction of freedom that we have been experiencing in this country over the past few years.

ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

HERBERT L. PACKER writes:

1) Kenneth Lamott criticizes my article for several reasons. As I made clear, the charges did not raise the question of Franklin's competence. If, as Mr. Lamott says, he didn't hear from anyone that Franklin's teaching had become incompetent, then his thoroughness as a reporter is quite suspect. Perhaps he believes that competence and having a following are synonymous. Mr. Lamott did not talk with the same students and English-department faculty members that I did. As for "bizarre," which, as I stated in the article, was my own and only estimate of Franklin's teaching, it surely is bizarre to call Edgar Snow the leading prose writer in English in this century. Does Mr. Lamott not think that this is bizarre?

2) I am glad to be told by Mr. Lamott that the ACLU has decided to help Franklin contest his dismissal. As a former member of the Board of Directors of the ACLU's Northern California Branch, I realize, as I realized when I resigned several years ago, that it was too much to hope that cooler heads on the Board might have

backed off from their earlier uncritical endorsement of Alan M. Dershowitz's views.

3) Andrew Nathan charges that my argument is "internally unpersuasive." Does that mean that it was externally persuasive?

4) The charges and the Board's decision (which Mr. Nathan really ought to read) make no mention of the facts on which my article did not "dwell." No, I have not forgotten "the Vietnam war, the Cambodian incursion . . ." etc. Indeed, Franklin was "not uniquely dangerous." He and his sort exist on every campus. It is only when their speech amounts to incitement that they should be exposed to discipline.

5) In response to Mr. Dershowitz, let me begin by saying that COMMENTARY has already told him that it was their responsibility not mine that the facts concerning my involvement with Stanford's affairs were not printed with my article. I did not pretend disinterest. How could I have when the last fifteen years of my life have been devoted to that institution? But then I did not file a brief purporting to represent a disinterested opinion. In submitting his *amicus* brief, Mr. Dershowitz presumably did just that. The chairman of the Advisory Board asked him to disclose his interest if he had one. Mr. Dershowitz professed to be outraged by this request. In fact, well before he prepared his *amicus* brief, he had spent a couple of hours with Franklin. Only he and Franklin know what went on during that conference. In his letter, Mr. Dershowitz mentions the name of Joel Klein, his research assistant. Joel Klein's salary was paid by Mr. Dershowitz. (That is of course a euphemism; it was the Harvard Law School that paid Mr. Klein to work for Mr. Dershowitz during his year at the think tank.) In addition, the two men are, I understand, close friends. These facts hardly support Mr. Dershowitz's claim of being concerned in the case only as a disinterested *amicus*. One marvels at his holier-than-thou air.

6) I apologize for having referred to a "young lawyer from Los Angeles." That lawyer was the university's principal counsel during the hearings. He is a former student of mine. I did not intend to low-rate him.

7) Mr. Dershowitz has now settled on the issue of payment to counsel as an argument for dis-

crediting the Advisory Board. This argument is just an afterthought: why didn't he make it in his *amicus* brief? Mr. Dershowitz says that "a written request for legal assistance was placed in the box of every member" of the law-school faculty; in fact what was placed in my box was an unsigned mimeographed flier calling for an open meeting to "discuss" the problem of Franklin's counsel. It is indeed true that one of my colleagues was asked by Franklin to represent him. Unfortunately, that colleague was too busy with such trivial outside commitments as directing the constitutional efforts to halt the death penalty to take Franklin's case.

8) When Mr. Dershowitz refers to *Brandenburg*, the Supreme Court's last word on incitement, he quotes the Court's paraphrase of the Ohio statute that was held unconstitutional and then claims that what *Brandenburg* said was not incitement and then he claims "this is exactly what Packer said Franklin did." Wrong, of course. The Supreme Court said "except where such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action." That is precisely what the Advisory Board, quoted in my article, held that Franklin did. Another interesting distortion by Mr. Dershowitz.

9) I appreciate the fervor of Mr. Dershowitz's support for First Amendment rights. I share that support, as did the members of the Advisory Board. But even that old absolutist Hugo Black never claimed that all words were protected. We all know that inciters rarely put their hands on the rope.

10) Mr. Dershowitz spends a good deal of his letter on the "facts" of the case. Since he had, before the presentation of the facts in the hearing, already committed himself to Franklin's cause, he is a little late to be caring about the "facts." I will say that in every material particular Mr. Dershowitz distorts the facts as found by the Advisory Board. For example, with respect to Franklin's second speech in the Old Union Courtyard, one witness testified that "Professor Franklin called specifically for people's war against the occupation army—i.e., the police." The Board held that: "The targets of Professor Franklin's animosity were quite explicit—the police and the university. He made an

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intensive effort in the two speeches to generate further hostility toward these targets. He provided justification for coercive and violent behavior toward them, without specifying precisely what the nature of such acts should be, leaving that to the judgment and the imagination of each individual or small group." Contrast that with Mr. Dershowitz's snippets of extracts from the Board's decision. Ask yourself to what lengths one is entitled to go to save one's own position.

Jews and the City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his efforts to show the particular urban qualities of American Jews, Marshall Sklare ["Jews, Ethnic, and the American City," April] unfortunately ignores other vital urban phenomena, misrepresents a source central to his argument, and does violence to the sociology of ethnicity (both Jewish and non-Jewish) and to the social history of ethnic groups in America.

Mr. Sklare argues that "the Jews, more than any other group, have been among America's most enthusiastic city-dwellers, regarding the urban environment not as a problem or a source of pain, but as an opportunity and a place of pleasure," and further that other ethnic groups "looked back to a village or rural past to which they remained so strongly attached as to make it difficult for them to become true urbanites." Jews were different, he argues, because when they looked back, the romance was underlaid with realism, and this facilitated their liberating outlook on urban possibilities.

I have no quarrel with Mr. Sklare's assessment of Jewish love for city life (except to question his view that Jewish romanticization of the *shtetl* is a recent phenomenon), but wonder why he sees it as so unique. The Irish, for example, a group not discussed in his article, are also urbanites. A recent National Opinion Research Center survey of Catholic Americans shows the Irish to be the most urban of all Catholic ethnic groups. . . .

Jews were not, and are not, the only group to favor apartments over houses in the urban milieu. It seems parochial to argue that "Jews . . . do not necessarily experience the proximity of neighbors as an invasion of privacy." A

recently published study on ethnic groups in Connecticut cities shows the Irish to have even higher percentages of apartment dwellers than the Jews and other groups; for different economic and ethnic reasons, the Irish are among the most likely of all groups to favor apartments, and this is true at both white-collar and blue-collar levels (Harold J. Abramson, "Ethnic Pluralism in the Central City," in *Ethnic Groups in the City*, ed. Otto Feinstein, D.C. Heath). . . .

Mr. Sklare . . . cites *The Zone of Emergence*, the reports on immigrant-group life in Boston (1905-14) by Robert Woods and Albert Kennedy, to show that these Protestant ministers and social workers (with their own rural bias) admired the Italians for their "traditional village ways" and disliked the Jews for their "urbanism." Mr. Sklare misrepresents these men. Woods and Kennedy did not overlook the problems which the Italians encountered in the city, and they did not ignore the Jewish disposition toward the values of Protestant America. (Sam Bass Warner, Jr., the editor of the book, warns readers in his preface that the manuscript, which was found in incomplete form, is confused and full of contradictions.) In fact, Woods and Kennedy at times applaud the Jews, of whom they write: "They are energetic, appreciative of the best motives, and may be expected to occupy a far from unimportant place among the citizens of the future." . . .

Much more important than this kind of ill-formed and superficial comparison, though, is the problem that Mr. Sklare raises when he misreads these authors. He suggests, as an aside, that the authors possessed ingrained anti-Semitic attitudes, but I doubt that an anti-Semite would conclude that Jews are "appreciative of the best motives." Mr. Sklare is of the opinion that Woods and Kennedy felt the Jewish emphasis on education was in "bad taste," but I find nothing of the kind in this book, or in the many other works Woods wrote or edited on settlement-house life in Boston and on the nature of urban poverty at the turn of the century and into the 1920's. . . .

An equally important criticism pertains to Mr. Sklare's concluding pages, in which he writes: "Perhaps especially problematical for Jews has been the continuing influx into the city of the lower-class migrant groups—Southern blacks,

Puerto Ricans, Appalachian poor, and Chicanos—who bring with them a host of social problems lacking in intrinsic solution. Unlike the Jews, these newcomers to the city have no tradition of communal self-help." Yet, . . . many of the Yankee Protestants and German Jews were saying the same thing not that long ago about the Irish, the Italians, and the Eastern European Jews. They too were confident that the array of social problems lacked an "intrinsic solution" because, unlike themselves, these urban newcomers had no traditions of urban life, of individuality, or of reformist religion. . . . Saying that the new migrant groups have urban problems with no intrinsic solution strikes me as an elegant way of scapegoating, but one that is nevertheless only degrees more sophisticated than the arguments of earlier critics of diversity and urban squalor. . . .

Mr. Sklare concludes that the decision of some of the Forest Hills Jews to fight for the integrity of their neighborhood can be seen as an "act of affirmation," keeping faith with the city by remaining urban. It can also be seen, however, as yielding to inter-group conflict. . . . The Holocaust and the development of Israel have indeed contributed heavily to the resurgence of Jewish ethnicity, and the black movement of the 1960's and 1970's has also reminded all Americans of the nation's fundamental ethnic diversity. But just as some urban Jews have come to respond with ethnic confrontation, as in Forest Hills, so have some urban Irish in Boston (with Louise Day Hicks), some urban Italians in Philadelphia (with Frank Rizzo), some urban Poles in Buffalo (with Alfreda Slominski), and some urban Lithuanians in Chicago when they threw rocks at Martin Luther King. We are villagers all, pecking at the painted bird.

Inter-group conflict flourishes in hard times because of rapid economic or social changes, and perhaps that is when forms of ethnicity reemerge from our vast pluralistic society to salve our wounds, especially for those whose opportunities are restricted or diminishing. Apparently, the need for research into historical and contemporary comparative ethnicity is even greater than I realized if a sociologist of Mr. Sklare's experience can make the assumptions and arguments he does in his ar-



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ticle. His parochialism really gets in the way of his sociology.

HAROLD J. ABRAMSON
University of Connecticut
Storrs, Connecticut

MARSHALL SKLARE writes:

With regard to my interpretation of *The Zone of Emergence* by Woods and Kennedy, I believe that the value of the book lies precisely in its incomplete form; the critical references to Jews which I cited would undoubtedly have been toned down had the manuscript undergone revision. But these and other aspects of Mr. Abramson's letter are incidentals. The nub of the issue is his charge that my writing is suffused with what he terms a "parochialism" so intense as to get in the way of my sociology.

It is true that I have no qualms about attributing qualities to American Jews which may contain elements of uniqueness. I regret that Mr. Abramson finds this offensive, but it is not surprising inasmuch as he displays in his letter a passionate need to demonstrate that Jews are just like everyone else, only more so.

On Henry James

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In support of Norman Podhoretz's swinging defense ["A Minor Cultural Event," April] brought on by Philip Rahv's attack in the *New York Review of Books*, I should like to offer cheers for Henry James. Impatient with extended analysis which belabors James for issues he could not have foretold, I am inclined to say: why don't you simply read him?

Like Edward Grossman in the same issue ["Henry James & the Sexual-Military Complex"], who seems to have come to Henry James straightforwardly and enthusiastically in his younger years, I read James in all innocence first when I was twenty-five. I read him then for fun and still do (although I was guilty of writing a short book about him before I was twenty-nine).

Even Leon Edel's careful, thoughtful biography, which seems to have provoked at last a counter-reaction against James, has always seemed to me to make Henry James smaller than he really was. Edel's "master" lacks some of

the robustness, the traces of naiveté, the shyness, which the great man kept even into his old age. He had to the last that willing response to experience which is a danger to the human being and an asset to the creator. He said: "Be one of those on whom nothing is lost." And he was. Of course the range of his experience was not broad. He was no ditch digger, no rum runner, no college professor. But what he knew he knew deeply in his very bones, and he digested it and made it all over again into something rich and strange.

It seems unnecessary to defend James. The books are there, the characters are there, the defense of life against death as packed and crammed into plot and scene, that is there too.

Snob? I think not, although the circumstances of his later life, in which he armored himself in clothes, house, garden, and settled habits were only a defense against the terror which he knew to be in life, his "beast in the jungle."

Conservative? He thought himself a flaming liberal in real life as contrasted to the artist's life. He lined himself up on the radical side, at least in his quiet sympathies. In his art, he was inventive, daring, infinitely open to the new, while examining the old, the staid, and the settled, the heavily seated organs of life. These fascinated him, but only as a danger to the young, the innocent, the open-minded, who dared to confront all this settledness in old societies. See Daisy Miller. See Milly Theale.

He could tell a story. He could invent living characters. He experimented in the joys of form in fiction. In other words, he worked. That was after all what he was: a workman. Not a society man, not a defender of what was. He was an intrusive element. Like a wise child sitting in a corner, James sat in the corners of the great world and took it all in. Then in those periods which alternated with his social life he was a man alone in a room bending his back over a desk putting words on paper.

After this late heady period, when some of the praise given him has been ill-advised, it seems that Henry James's reputation may once more suffer an eclipse. But he is still there and the books are to be read. People will continue to re-discover him.

ELIZABETH STEVENSON
Atlanta, Georgia

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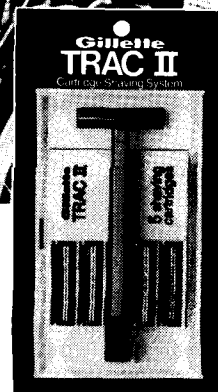
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Princeton Faculty

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:
 . . . A simple telephone call to me, as Departmental Representative, or to the chairman of the Princeton English department, would have prevented Arthur Cooper [Letters from Readers, July] from writing that "it is well known in the university community that Princeton's English department will not hire Jewish professors." Since September 1950 when I joined the English department, I have continuously had Jewish colleagues. At present I have four. On what ground does Mr. Cooper accuse Princeton of religious discrimination in faculty hiring?

RICHARD M. LUDWIG
 Department of English
 Princeton University
 Princeton, New Jersey

Man and Woman

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:
 Leslie H. Farber ["He Said, She Said," March] makes the same error Sigmund Freud and most other psychiatrists have made in

presuming to know what woman does or does not experience. It is time for man to leave the defining of female existence to woman herself.

As a woman who has experienced "undifferentiated lust," I would suggest that if this is not consciously experienced by some women it is due to the excessive repression and denial of sexual feelings brought about by the socialization process on the female. Historically this repression of undifferentiated lust was a response to a woman's role as procreator, that is, she had to deny her sexual urgings because . . . she knew that if they were acted upon she might find herself with child but with no means of livelihood and with a stigma both on herself and on the child. . . .

Dr. Farber says: "What she experiences that corresponds to some degree to his undifferentiated lust is an undifferentiated desire to be desired by anyone and everyone." This is typical male talk assuring other men that all women welcome their sexual advances *at all times*. Actually it becomes very tiresome to have to cope continu-

ally with these sexual advances. . . .

I would suggest that the adolescent boy is as likely as the girl to experience a "desire to be desired by anyone and everyone." . . .

Dr. Farber says that the inferiority the boy experiences is due to the hidden sexuality of his mother. In this he reminds me of a young psychiatrist who when told his twelve-month-old daughter was masturbating expressed pity that she had "nothing there." Female sexuality is no more hidden from the male than male sexuality is hidden from the female, the problem is that man does not want to recognize female sexuality as existing in and for itself and not just for him. . . .

HEATHER HORNE
 Toronto, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Leslie H. Farber's chief premise is that women communicate more of the facts and feelings of their day to their spouses at day's end than their husbands do to them. He then tries to explain this "reluctance" of men to talk to women in terms of psychological mechanisms dating from early childhood and adolescence. . . . But where is the evidence for this relative "reluctance" of men to talk? Are we to believe that wives in general communicate more to their husbands than their husbands communicate to them, or that this is true only of wives of Dr. Farber's acquaintance?

Moreover, Dr. Farber's conceptualization of "serious talk" between the sexes is inadequate, even if one accepts, for the sake of argument, his basic premise. Attend any gathering of mixed company assembled to discuss a substantive issue (i.e., not a cocktail party) . . . and you will find that the women talk *less* than the men. They ask fewer questions, express fewer opinions, make fewer proposals for affirmative action.

Assuming data would support these impressions, Dr. Farber's question, then, should be: Why do women talk more in a one-to-one relationship with a man they know well, while men talk more in mixed groups?

Seen in this context, Dr. Farber's assertion that men talk little because of their "habits of disavowal" stemming from the denial of "undifferentiated lust" in adolescence makes no sense. Assuming, again without data, that adolescent boys experience more undifferentiated lust than do ad-



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olescent girls (though feminists might call this a sexist theory based on the erroneous Victorian view of women as "pure" and sexless), . . . is not undifferentiated lust in adolescence a poor explanation for the non-talking forty-year-old husband? . . .

The second obstacle Dr. Farber cites to serious man-woman talk is that from early childhood on, boys and men feel inferior to girls and women because of their "mysterious inner complexity," their concealed and therefore awesome sexuality, before which man's external, visible sex organ is devalued. . . .

I suggest that if men feel an "apprehension of inferiority" regarding their sexuality, it is with reference to the performance of other men, and not with reference to the mysteries of the female experience. . . . Men's behavior toward women indicates that they, the men, feel themselves quite the superior gender: one may consult advertising, children's books, the behavior of one's friends, and a host of other cultural evidence to see how pervasive is the stereotype of the subservient, passive, self-effacing, dependent, less able woman in comparison with the intelligent, achieving, dominant, active, heroic man.

I propose two explanations for the differences in the conditions (cited above) under which men and women tend to talk to members of the opposite sex. One is that in our society men tend to have a one-dimensional perspective of women, namely, that of woman as sex object (women, on the other hand, view men as sex objects but in other terms as well). Since men in our society still hold to the mind-body dichotomy, if woman is "body," she cannot also be "mind." . . .

My second theory is based on the concept of "social role." . . . As a rule, the social role of women keeps them at home, talking mainly to other women and to children they know in one-to-one relationships. Thus they are more comfortable talking seriously in one-to-one relationships to a man they know well. In contrast, men, at work, become used to talking in groups to other men, with women in subservient roles taking notes and typing what they say. In such groups, men learn to edit their speech, making only the important points (to save the group's time) or the points they can back up with evidence. . . .

These theories, admittedly as speculative as Dr. Farber's, . . . are based on observable differences between the experiences of adult men and women, and draw less on hypothetical feelings of inferiority based on the sexuality of one sex or the other. . . . To reduce all behavior—male and female—to ramifications of the sexual function is a sexist approach to the understanding of human behavior. . . .

JUDITH RUBENSTEIN
Natick, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Talk about wild generalizations! I don't know where Leslie H. Farber ran into all those talky, complete wives and withdrawn husbands. I can tell him that I, for one, as an educated but stay-at-home mother, felt mighty incomplete for a long time. In fact, in those days, by the time my husband got home for supper, I was usually pretty sullen and silent—in spite of, or maybe even *because* of, all my internal organs—and *he* did most of the talking.

Now that I'm out working again, I admit that I'm feeling much more complete—but then my husband feels pretty good about himself, too. So we share the talking fifty-fifty. Maybe this is not normal. Could it be because my husband doesn't have the advantage of a French Tickler lurking in his adolescent past, as Dr. Farber tells us he does? I wonder.

BARBARA MITTMAN
Evanston, Illinois

Hereditry vs. Environment

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David K. Cohen ["Does IQ Matter?," April] argues that IQ is not very important in determining social status in America, not as important as education, and so, he says, a hereditary meritocracy does not loom in our future. But, as he acknowledges, IQ and education are substantially correlated. And he further acknowledges that IQ is substantially heritable. It turns out that those two facts undermine his case, for they suggest that educational achievement in America is itself heritable. Only if education depended exclusively on that relatively small component of variation in IQ that is not inherited could education be non-genetic, and there is no support for that improbability. In fact, surmise is unnecessary, for the existing data

imply a sizable heritability of .5 to .6 for educational achievement, although the figure is not nearly so firmly fixed as is the .75-.85 for IQ. Taking him entirely at face value, then, we are still confronted with the likelihood of social stratification based to some extent on genetic endowment.

In the future, says Mr. Cohen, we will have greater equality of education. I hope he is right, but what does that portend for the sorting out of people into the scale of occupations? Let us assume for argument's sake that we succeed somehow in educating everybody equally (another improbability). What would predict social standing then? Of course, we could further assume that social standing is therefore also equalized, but that is too easy a solution to the egalitarian's problem. If there are social classes, and if education has been equalized, then the two can no longer be correlated. As Mr. Cohen doubtless knows, removing a source of variance like education must, other things being equal, increase the magnitude of the correlation between social class and its other correlates, among them IQ. Mr. Cohen says, perhaps anticipating this rejoinder, that IQ has no effect on people's jobs independent of their schooling. While it is true that some studies have failed to uncover an independent effect of IQ, that could easily be because IQ and schooling in those studies were closely linked to begin with. What Mr. Cohen does not, and cannot, say is that if IQ and schooling were sufficiently decorrelated—by equalizing education—to take the heritability and predictive validity out of schooling, IQ would still have no independent effect.

Mr. Cohen mentions other factors that may contribute to job status—enterprise, motivation, preferences, and "the luck of the draw," as if the operation of these argued against a meritocracy. In three out of those four, there may be, and likely are, genetic elements, further contributing to the biological basis of social status. In my article on IQ which Mr. Cohen criticizes, I noted that IQ probably ties into only one of the several genetic parameters of social status. I had in mind other parameters like enterprise and interest, plus still others, like temperament, even physical stamina, health, and appearance. Mr. Cohen's apparent insensitivity to the possible genetic elements in these other socially im-

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portant dimensions of variation is further proof that the study of the biological roots of human society has languished too long in the shadow of the temple of the environmentalist dogma, depriving us of a balanced prospect. Because we know so much about both its heritability and its predictive validity, the IQ, rather than those other parameters, seemed to me a good place to begin to shed a little light. After Mr. Cohen's article, I still think so.

R. J. HERRNSTEIN
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David K. Cohen's article makes an excellent case for the abandonment of IQ as a guidepost in the fight over equal educational opportunities for the races. . . . Mr. Cohen makes it perfectly clear that success is not something that can be predicted by a scale designed to measure potential but seems rather to depend on the determination of the individual. One point Mr. Cohen makes deserves more attention. He states that the findings of an experiment under way in Milwaukee show that children from poor families, given an enriched environment, can make formidable gains in IQ. He also states that evidence has shown that "as the experience recedes into the past so does the effect diminish." But this only proves that the white child (or black) in a superior environment maintains his IQ advantage because his superior environment is also maintained.

The failure of both integrated classes and separate-but-equal segregated classes to produce academic proficiency in ghetto blacks proves not that the black children are genetically inferior but that they are environmentally inferior. . . .

JON MAY
Clearwater, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . To worry about "nature vs. nurture," is to beat a dead horse. The variables are too many and too difficult to control to enable us to reach a conclusion about the effectiveness of one or the other upon our destiny. Individuals succeed despite the uncontrollable variables in the environment if they are of a mind to. Neither a good home, nor a good school, nor a long or short term within a par-

ticular educational environment, has much to do with it.

R. F. BECKER
Michigan State University
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David K. Cohen succeeds in avoiding the central meaning of the IQ: that the IQ is, after all, a device which should enable clinicians, psychologists, and educators to filter out those children who—in the words of Binet and Simon—are "unable to profit, in an average measure, from the instruction given in the ordinary schools." When IQ is dissociated from its statistical and, hence, its artificial, prognostic significance, it becomes a measure of a given individual's ability to score—at a given point in time—on a specific test. In the setting of Israel's kibbutzim, a relatively uniform environmental setting obtains with reference both to the learning situation and to the socialization of the children in a given settlement. These children show some ethnic variation but, as yet, little significant genetic mixing. Under such conditions, there are indications that differences in IQ can be leveled—insofar as formal learning and socialization are concerned—by changing the stimulus for learning for most of the IQ-deficient children. It would follow that it ought to be possible to change the IQ score by changing the test: or, more specifically, by changing the nature of the stimulus used on the test. If our assumptions are in any measure correct, perceptual differences linked to cultural or racial differences lead to IQ deficiencies simply because the test materials are not appropriate to the assessments they undertake to make. . . .

G. M. STERN
Child Guidance Clinic of the
Kibbutzim
Haifa, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . David K. Cohen writes that "the importance of schooling to occupational status may itself be based on a variety of non-intellectual factors. Employers use the school system as an elaborate behavior-screening mechanism, on the theory that certain kinds of work require certain kinds of personalities. . . . Students who have 'better' manners, who behave 'properly,' who accept authority, and who look the way they should, tend to

be routed into higher-status school work and occupations."

The screening argument is very popular, but makes *no* sense. Why should a firm pay a college graduate several thousands of dollars more than a high-school or elementary-school graduate simply because, on the average, college graduates are more likely to "behave properly" than those with less schooling? Using a 10-per-cent discount rate, the present value of the extra wages paid by a firm for a college rather than a high-school graduate is \$25,000 to \$30,000. If the role of schooling were only to screen workers, far less expensive screening techniques (tests or trial periods) could easily be developed.

Perhaps Mr. Cohen thinks he was given his present job because he has better manners, behaves properly, and accepts authority!

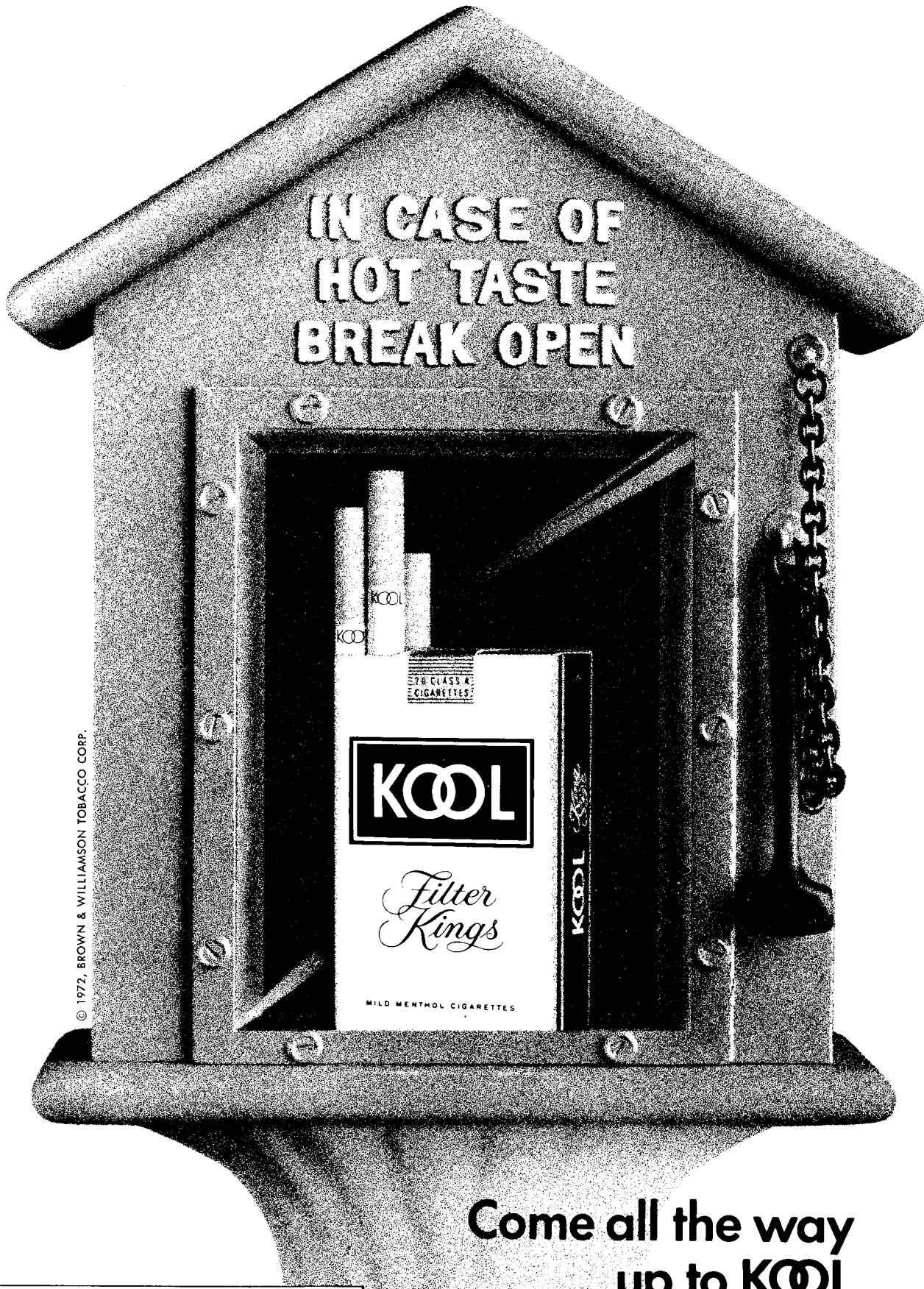
BARRY R. CHISWICK
Queens College
Flushing, New York

DAVID K. COHEN writes:

R. J. Herrnstein's letter at least proves that people can disagree endlessly about the same evidence. He thinks that the heritability of IQ and the relation between IQ and educational attainment prove that education is heritable and that meritocracy is upon us. I think that the same evidence shows that IQ is a modest influence on educational attainment, and that success in school depends a lot more on other factors. I think the prospect of meritocracy is much less likely than is that of a social structure based on lots of less attractive criteria, like the ones currently encouraged by schools. Professor Herrnstein parries by saying that those other factors may be heritable too. They may be, but so may be the tone of my voice. The current state of the evidence is such that it supports almost no assertion save that we ought to know more.

Perhaps the most constructive response—and the most useful for those interested in such issues—is to point out that all the disagreements among the professors on these points are treated at great length in a forthcoming book by Christopher Jencks (*Inequality*, Basic Books, Fall 1972).

NOTE: Norman Podhoretz's column, "Issues," does not appear this month. Its regular monthly appearance will resume in September.



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The World of the 70's

Walter Laqueur

THE present moment in world politics is one of transition (defined once by a distinguished economist as the interval between two other periods of transition), and it is characterized on the level of theory and action alike by a great deal of confusion, by exaggerated hopes and exaggerated fears, by wishful thinking and groundless pessimism. Certainly one of the main contributing factors to the confusion is what has come to be known in America as neo-isolationism (it has also been called "the foreign politics of neo-humanism")—that retreat from globalism which seems to be the defining mark of the current American mood. The retreat may not in the end go as far as some hope and others fear, but no one can dispute that the impulse behind it is today a major presence in American domestic politics or that its repercussions on the world scene will be widespread and decisive. Although it was no doubt hastened by Vietnam, there is reason to suppose that the new mood would have developed anyway, perhaps inevitably. Any sustained effort to pursue a global policy must be based either on a missionizing ideology of considerable firmness and longevity, or on a carefully calculated plan of action that combines ambition with farsightedness and discrimination. Neither of these preconditions has been much in evidence in American foreign policy.

It is easy to understand neo-isolationism as a mood: Americans have paid a high price for globalism and have received little enough in return. It is beginning to occur to some people that the world at large, which in any case has proved incurably addicted to turmoil and perversity, can get along without American help and guidance. But apart from its inherent attractiveness, neo-isolationism has also received justification as the correct ideological response to a new world political situation. Briefly, that new situation has been described as one of "multipolarity." Both the United States and the Soviet Union, it

is argued, find themselves declining in relative influence, and both have grudgingly accepted this state of affairs. New centers of power are rapidly emerging in various parts of the world which provide a genuine regional balance. Conditions are now ideal for a true and lasting détente. As they turn away from their obsolete global ambitions and their lunatic arms race, the U.S. and Russia will find it possible at last to attend to their multitudinous problems at home—the former moving toward the realization of the American dream, the latter pursuing its vision of the Communist future. The cold war having been liquidated, the era of truly peaceful competition (and cooperation) in a pluralist world will be ushered in.

Thus, in his report to Congress last February, President Nixon himself announced the end of the postwar bipolar world and pointed to the "increasing self-reliance of the states created by the dissolution of empires and the growth of both their ability and determination to see to their own security and well-being." Recently, Sir Herbert Butterfield, proclaiming it a good thing that we have in the world both a Soviet Union and a United States, said that it would be "better still if we [could] have three such giants or four or five, better again, even, to have seven."* The International Institute of Strategic Studies in its last annual report announced the emergence of a new "great-power quadrilateral," a "genuinely global system with two non-white countries (China and Japan) firmly among the leaders." And an American author has coined the term "pentagonal world" (he was not referring to the place where Melvin Laird works).

To be sure, not every prophet of multipolarity has regarded it as a panacea for all the world's ills; Stanley Hoffman, for instance, wrote in 1968 that "it is all too easy to imagine a multi-hierarchical system of dizzying instability." But quite apart from the issue of its desirability, it is highly questionable whether the vision of a multipolar world corresponds at all to the facts of international life. For no such symmetry in

WALTER LAQUEUR, who comments regularly in these pages on international affairs, is director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London and a professor at Tel Aviv University. The present essay forms the first of a two-part series on the current world situation; the second part, an extended discussion of neo-isolationism in America, will appear next month.

* *The Discontinuities between the Generations in History* (The Rede Lecture), Cambridge, 1972.

power between the United States and the Soviet Union as the theory of multipolarity posits has actually been achieved: in the economic and military spheres the United States is still ahead and will in all probability remain ahead for the foreseeable future, while in the political and psychological spheres the Soviet Union is ahead and seems ready to increase its lead. Nor, secondly, are any new centers of power such as are envisioned by the theory of multipolarity likely to emerge during the next two decades. In the survey that follows I shall attempt first of all to assess the relative economic and political positions of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, taking special note of the likely impact of the recent SALT agreements, and then go on to consider the role in the new world situation of Japan, Western Europe, and China. Such a *tour d'horizon* should have the effect of placing in a colder but truer light the notion of an emergent multipolarity in the international system.

I

FOR over four decades now Soviet leaders have been promising to overtake America in the economic sphere. They have pointed with satisfaction to the advances made by their system as compared with the stagnant, crisis-ridden capitalist world. The official program of the Communist party of the Soviet Union, as it was reformulated under Khrushchev, stated unambiguously that in the decade of the 60's "the Soviet Union will surpass the strongest and richest capitalist country, the United States of America, in production per head of population." This slogan has now been replaced by a more modest one. According to the most recent announcements, the USSR expects by 1975 to surpass the present level of American industrial and agricultural production; this, it is said, will be a "major milestone in the Soviet Union's economic competition with the capitalist countries."

It is not an unrealistic prediction. In 1971 more steel was produced in the Soviet Union than in the United States. In the production of coal the Soviet Union overtook the U.S. as long ago as 1958, and in the production of cement in 1967. The USSR also produces more raw iron and iron ore than the United States, and by 1975 it will probably produce more agricultural machinery as well as more of certain industrial and agricultural consumer goods. The Soviet GNP, no greater than one-third of the American in 1950, today stands at about half that of the U.S.* Present Soviet plans envisage an annual industrial growth rate of 8-9 per cent; agricultural

production in 1975 is expected to be at least 20 per cent above the current level.

These figures are impressive, but there are other aspects to the picture as well, less encouraging from the Soviet point of view. First, although the Soviet Union has gained ground vis-à-vis the U.S. in relative terms, the absolute distance is greater than ever before, and it is likely to increase even if the Soviet rate of growth should double that of the United States. (In 1950 the American GNP was 275 billion dollars greater than the Soviet GNP [in 1966 dollars]; at present it is 500 billion dollars greater or more.)

Secondly, up until recently Soviet planners have concentrated on "traditional," i.e., partly outdated, industries, and are consequently far behind the United States (and Japan as well) in science-oriented industries (electronics, computers, chemicals).

Thirdly, Soviet hopes for overtaking the United States rest on the assumption that America will perform poorly in the 70's while the Soviet Union (with the help of its economic allies) will meet, or exceed, the fairly high rates of growth it has fixed upon. But neither half of the assumption can be taken for granted. American real growth now runs at 6 per cent after two years of stagnation. The recent Soviet record, on the other hand, has been checkered: 1969 was fairly disastrous by Soviet standards (a growth rate of 2.3 per cent), 1970 was excellent (8.5 per cent), 1971 was far from outstanding (6 per cent—partly as a result of a bad harvest). Soviet economists expect that the new protectionist mood in the U.S. will result in a falling rate of growth, with stagnation and perhaps actual decline to follow; it is not certain they will be proved correct. But meanwhile there are several factors working to inhibit the growth of the Soviet economy. Soviet resources in manpower are limited; as a result, progress will depend on a very high, virtually an unprecedented, increase in productivity (36-40 per cent for the Ninth Five Year Plan). This in turn will depend to a large extent on the modernization of Soviet industry, and on the ability of the civilian sector to make dramatic progress in research-and-development in the years to come.

In the last-named area the Soviet Union has far to go. According to a report by Pyotr Kapitsa to the Academy of Sciences several years ago, the Soviet Union, with approximately the same number of scientists, has produced only half the scientific work of the U.S. Andrei Sakharov and his colleagues stated in a memorandum to the Soviet leadership that "we are ahead of the U.S. in the production of coal, but behind in the production of oil, gas, and electric power, ten times behind in chemistry and immeasurably behind in computer technology. We are simply living in a different era." To help redress the balance the

* Most of this advance was achieved in the 1950's; in 1960-69 the Soviet economy made virtually no progress toward improving its relative position vis-à-vis the U.S.

Soviet government is eager to derive what material benefit it can from Western technology—probably one of the main stimuli behind the current Soviet interest in détente.

This, then, is the economic picture at present. If current trends continue there is every reason to suppose that in basic industrial production the Soviet Union will make somewhat faster progress than the United States for the next few years. But beyond this, what? According to the scientists, a technological revolution, brought about by such impending developments as supersonic transport, weather control, the harnessing of thermonuclear energy in giant generating stations, third-generation computers, etc. While America has been falling behind in traditional industries like textiles and steel production, its lead in the field of computers and electronics has been steadily growing. And since the application of the new technology is very costly indeed, no one is predicting that the Soviet Union will be able to keep up.

Of course, any discussion of economic growth must take into account the increasingly vociferous opposition in the West to the very concept of unrestricted (“exponential”) growth. Pollution, adverse climatic effects, the increasing scarcity of mineral and other resources—these, along with the specter of a world population explosion, have been cited as reasons for slowing if not halting the rate of growth in the industrial countries. But only in the West, and specifically in the United States. The Communist aim remains as it has always been: maximum growth. As John Noble Wilford reported from Moscow a few months ago:

While the U.S. debates the possible ecological hazards of the Alaskan pipeline, the Soviet Union publishes boasts of the “world’s longest gas pipeline.” While American nuclear power stations are being stalled by protests, the Soviet Union is building reactors with a capacity of a million kilowatts or more, and is planning many more. While a wave of anti-technology sentiment in the U.S. killed the supersonic transport project and reduced spending for basic research and space exploitations, the Soviet Union is apparently expanding its support in such fields on the ground that science and technology are indispensable foundations of growth and progress. . . .*

The Soviet (and Chinese) attitude is not hard to understand. An economic slowdown at this point would simply perpetuate the Communist world’s position of economic inferiority. On some distant day, perhaps, having drawn level with or overtaken the non-Communist world, the Soviets may opt for deceleration—but not until then. Current policies calling for unrestricted industrial growth are deeply anchored in Communist theory and practice, and are not likely to be changed quickly or easily.

IN SHORT, as far as the 70’s are concerned, it can be predicted with reasonable certainty that the economic balance of power as between the Soviet Union and the United States will remain pretty much as it is. But what of the military balance of power? The essential facts are not in dispute;† the interpretation of them, however, diverges widely.

Broadly speaking, there exist in the United States three schools of thought on the question of strategic arms, and the SALT agreements have scarcely affected the basic arguments of each. The first maintains that as a result of a massive Soviet military build-up since the mid-60’s an imbalance has come into being which will grow during the years to come and reduce the U.S. to second-class status unless a major effort is made now to reverse the trend. While the U.S. has settled for parity (or “sufficiency”) the Soviet Union has built up its forces beyond the level needed for deterrence and seems to be aiming at superiority. In quantity of arms the U.S. is now inferior to the Soviet Union; if, as a result of further defense cuts, America should also lose its technological lead, an American President may one day end up, to use Secretary of Defense Laird’s phrase, crawling to the negotiating table of its victorious enemies.** True, the SALT agreements have put a ceiling on the production of certain arms, but the race to improve the *quality* of arms will continue, as will the effort to increase the power and the accuracy of existing weapons. In this area too the U.S. will be at a great disadvantage, since in circumstances of a pseudo-détente American defense planners will be much harder put than their Russian counterparts to get the allocations they need.

The second school of thought regards this appraisal as alarmist. To be sure, the Soviet Union has caught up with the United States and in some respects has overtaken it, with over 1,600 ICBM’s to America’s 1,054, and with a stepped-up submarine program that will probably result in numerical superiority of Polaris-type vessels within the year. Nevertheless, the implications of this situation have been overdramatized. In the

* New York Times, March 30, 1972.

† Admittedly there is some doubt as to the precise extent of defense spending in the Soviet budget. Official Soviet statements put it at 8 per cent of the total GNP, while some Western observers go as high as 15.2 per cent (M. Boretsky in “Economic Performance and the Military Burden in the Soviet Union,” Washington, 1970). Since the Soviet Union does not publish detailed figures, and since no one in the West can know for certain how much a “defense ruble” is worth, the debate is likely to continue for a long time. (See Alec Nove’s “Soviet Defense Spending” in *Survey*, October 1971.)

** See, for instance, the reports of the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel published in July 1970 and in March 1971; also, “The Military Unbalance” published by the National Strategy Information Center (New York, 1971); and W. Kintner and R. Pfaltzgraff, “Soviet Military Trends: Implications for U.S. Security” (Washington, 1971).

first place, the Soviet Union reached "rough parity" ten years ago. Secondly, the Soviets themselves face considerable domestic constraints (economic rather than political) on defense spending, and as the SALT treaty shows, they have in fact acknowledged the ruinously expensive cost of achieving a first-strike capacity. Seen from this vantage point, the present Soviet buildup has been a futile exercise in "overkill."

The third school of thought maintains that American defense spokesmen, who constitute a kind of lobby for the military, have always exaggerated Soviet military power in order to get more money out of Congress. Thus U.S. military spokesmen predicted for years that the Soviets were about to develop MIRV's (multiple independently-targetable reentry vehicles), whereas in fact they were lagging seriously behind; as a result the gap in missile warheads widened rapidly in favor of the United States—so much so, according to I. F. Stone, that the Russians now fear "we are trying for some kind of counterforce, preemptive, or first-strike capacity." In any case, in the opinion of the third school of thought, the cold war is over, and in today's world military power is no longer a measure of political power. Now that an agreement has been reached on the limitation of strategic arms, the U.S. should follow through with a drastic reduction of its arms budget, unilaterally if necessary.

Although each of these conflicting views has its own element of distortion and bias, each also contains an element of truth (albeit of unequal weight). The first school of thought correctly stresses the dangers that will confront the United States a few years hence unless it continues to be on guard. American technological superiority in the military field is not all that substantial, and if defense spending on research-and-development falls much below the Soviet level, the consequences could be serious indeed. Yet it is also true, as proponents of the second and third schools have argued, that for the foreseeable future America's position cannot be much affected by quantitative Soviet superiority in any one specific area. Military spokesmen do tend to exaggerate potential peril in order to obtain budgetary allocations, although in a sense it is their obligation to do so, just as it is the duty of a physician to take account of the worst possibility in making a diagnosis of illness. That such an approach has its own dangers goes without saying, and they are not only the dangers of overspending. By stressing Soviet strength and American weakness, military spokesmen in the United States run the risk of creating an adverse political effect abroad, inviting America's European and Far Eastern allies to conclude that the U.S. commitment to their defense is unreliable.

We touch here on a central issue. When military might has been neutralized, as it effectively has, other factors come to assume decisive importance: the appearance and credibility of power,

and the readiness to exercise power in the pursuit of national interests. Political power, like justice, must be made manifest to be appreciated. In this respect the image of America as far as the outside world is concerned is more and more that of a nation unwilling to exercise power, a nation beset by a mood of pervasive defeatism, and ridden with internal dissent. On the other hand, the Soviet Union presents itself as purposeful and dynamic, out to win the global struggle rather than to preserve the status quo. No guilty feelings are expressed in the Soviet Union on the subject of power; on the contrary, there is a great and growing self-confidence, which feeds on the American retreat from globalism.

This description of the situation may seem grossly to overstate American weakness and Soviet strength. But the image counts as much as the reality—in Europe, in the Third World, and, of course, in the Soviet Union—and although as of today the belief that the American ship is sinking has not yet become widespread in Europe and Japan, and the Russians still have a healthy respect for American power, America's image is changing, and for the worse. This is not to say that the Soviet Union will risk a head-on confrontation with the U.S. in order to hasten the process. There is in fact no need for it to do so, even for strategic gain. Other things being equal, future conflicts around the world will be fought by conventional forces and their outcome will be decided by the local balance of power. In most of the potential danger zones the Soviet Union already possesses the advantage, both of geographical proximity and of military and political initiative. In Europe, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, Moscow can turn on the heat at will. Whether or not it does so, the mere fact that it can makes all the difference in the world.

Thus, irrespective of the statistics on defense spending, missiles, and nuclear submarines, a basic political imbalance has developed between the United States and the Soviet Union.

II

BUT if there is no symmetry between the United States and the Soviet Union such as the theory of multipolarity asserts, neither is there any real ground for supposing that new superpowers have emerged.

Of the members of the alleged new league of superpowers none has been the subject of more extravagant claims than Japan. "Japan's emergence to its new postwar status," writes Andrew J. Pierre, "is the result of its gradual though impressive evolution to the rank of the third most powerful economic country in the world in the 1970's."* According to Herman Kahn, Japan

* "Europe and America in a Pentagonal World," *Survey*, Winter 1972.

is bound to become an economic and technological superstate within the next two decades; and Hisao Kanamori, of the Japanese Economic Planning Agency, has estimated that per-capita income in Japan in the early 1980's will be level with that of the United States and almost three times higher than Britain's. To put it even more dramatically, by 1990 Japan's economy will supposedly have overtaken America's, a country with twice Japan's population; the Soviet Union will have been outdistanced long before.

At the time these predictions were being made—only a year ago—it was assumed that Japan would have the technological momentum, the work force (as well as the work ethos), and the export markets necessary to make such growth possible, if not inevitable. Labor shortage, inflation, environmental problems, possible changes in world-trade patterns—all were thought to be of limited significance. Yet within the space of a year this euphoria has given way to more sober assessments. It has been realized, for instance, that an economy so heavily oriented toward exports is unbalanced and vulnerable; Japanese exports now face tariff difficulties in the United States and Europe, and there are limits to what the Far Eastern market can absorb. (Thailand's trade deficit with Japan already exceeds that country's total foreign-exchange reserves.) Some of the present difficulties are probably transient in character, but others are structural and may well inhibit economic growth in the years to come. For Japan, 1971 was a year of multiple shock. Even while some foreign commentators were predicting that the 21st would be the Japanese century, the mood inside Japan was becoming more and more subdued. Suddenly people were asking whether Japan should not seek a détente with Russia or China, or perhaps both; whether it should not opt for unarmed neutrality; whether it might not be possible to insure Japan's viability as a nation without maintaining a close link with the United States. There is a great deal of soul-searching in Japan, but none of the confidence befitting a superpower.

The Chinese maintain publicly that the present crisis is bound to propel Japan toward militarization. They point to the fact that despite the provision in the 1947 constitution banning the maintenance of military forces, Japanese self-defense units have been established and equipped not only with rifles but with tanks, missiles, submarines, destroyers, and a thousand planes. Between 1972 and 1976, about 16 billion dollars will be spent on expanding and improving the Japanese army. As a result Japan will move from twelfth to seventh place among the world's nations in defense spending. According to some experts Japan will be able to produce Minuteman-type missiles within three years.

Such assessments, however, ignore both the

general context of Far Eastern politics and the strong internal forces opposing Japanese remilitarization. Japan spent in 1970 less than 0.8 per cent of its GNP on defense, the lowest figure by far of any country of comparable size and population. (Under the "Fourth Defense" build-up program the figure will rise to 1 per cent.) Paragraph 9 of Japan's constitution prohibits offensive weapons, a conscription system, and sending troops overseas. The constitution can be reinterpreted (or sidestepped) to a certain extent, but popular anti-militarist feeling is strong and cannot easily be overcome.

In foreign policy, Japan for twenty-five years took the American nuclear umbrella for granted. Now there is serious doubt whether America will be able or willing to honor its commitments even if the Seventh Fleet remains and air-force units are stationed as before in the Philippines, Guam, and Okinawa. Statements from Washington proclaiming the end of bipolarism have been echoed by declarations in Tokyo heralding the age of multipolarization and the need for a foreign policy "divorced from ideology." Influential circles on both the Left and the Right favor a revision of the security pact with the United States or its abolition. But the fact is that despite its economic strength, Japan is far from being a major power center and the number of options open to it is very limited indeed. A neutralist policy would probably best correspond to the mood prevailing in Tokyo. The Japanese could sign a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union at any time, but the gesture would be meaningless. As for China, in view of its distrust of Japan, an exceedingly great effort will be needed before relations between the two countries can be normalized, and the Soviet Union can be expected to view any such effort with disfavor.

JAPAN has attempted to boost its trade with China. In 1971 such trade reached an all-time high but it still amounted to less than a billion dollars, and there are no real prospects for dramatic improvement. China's total foreign trade is hardly any bigger today than it was in the 1920's, and it will probably not increase by much; the myth of the unlimited possibilities of the Chinese market dies hard. The Soviet Union is only too eager to increase its trade with Japan but it insists on low-interest loans and offers payment in oil over a period of twenty years starting in 1978. Such conditions, needless to say, are not very attractive from the Japanese point of view. This leaves the United States and Europe as Japan's leading customers.

The American economic complaint against Japan is, very briefly, that Japan has refused to liberalize its trade, that it buys mainly raw materials from America and exports highly sophisticated machinery. In Western Europe, where its trade is more limited, Japan faces a similar prob-

lem. It has been selling ships, cars, and electronic equipment, while it has bought from Europe whisky, expensive woollens, and confectionery goods. This has resulted predictably in European measures limiting Japanese imports. The Japanese now realize the necessity of having a larger measure of reciprocity and of "voluntary self-control," but given the limited size of the domestic market and the structure of Japanese industry this will be easier said than done.

The Japanese dilemma appears likely to resist rapid solution. In all probability economic growth will not continue on the phenomenal level of the past, and in the meantime social conflicts are intensifying and a growing polarization is visible on the domestic front. All in all, Japan offers a striking example of the truth that GNP is not a synonym for power. Japanese political leaders, who believe that their nation has the greatest power potential in the Far East, complain regularly of American coldness and indifference to Japan. But the Soviet attitude has been exactly the same as the American. The Russians are concerned about China, whose GNP is less than half of Japan's; they do not lose a minute's sleep over Tokyo. Such are the realities of power in 1972.

III

LET us turn next to contemporary Europe, an area of the world characterized at present by two encouraging features: (relative) peace and prosperity. There has been no war in Europe in over twenty-five years and there is no likelihood of there being one. Considering the state of the continent at the end of World War II, the economic and cultural revival Europe has undergone is little short of miraculous. I see in fact no reason to revise a judgment I made two years ago: "Far from 'dying in convulsions,' as Sartre predicted, Europe has shown a new vigor which has astonished friend and foe alike."*

Nevertheless Europe today can hardly be regarded as one of the five pillars of a new "pentagonal world system"; indeed, the very notion of Europe as a center of political power has about it a touch of the ludicrous. The internal situation in many European countries is, to put it mildly, far from stable. In Britain, the political climate has deteriorated during the last year both as a result of the situation in Ulster and because of internal social tensions. No longer is there a consensus on basic issues; an irresponsibility, indeed a silliness, has crept into British politics, reflected for instance in Labour's official attitude to European unity. The Irish, curiously enough, have been more farsighted in this respect. In France, the danger has by no means passed of a reversion to the bad old days of the Fourth Republic; Pompidou's government has demon-

strated little real leadership, and has suffered from several embarrassing *affaires*. The less said about the Italian and the Turkish domestic scenes, the better. Even in Germany, until recently a model of stability, the political climate has turned ugly, the polarization become sharper. Chancellor Willy Brandt's party has come under the influence of a new generation of activists, imbued with a sense of purpose and displaying much tactical ability, but in ideological inspiration closer to the Communist party than to Social Democracy; whether the new forces take over the party, or alternatively cause its defeat in the next election, the result may well be disastrous for Germany. Franco's reign nears its inglorious end and the Greek colonels will not last forever; it is difficult to imagine that either in Spain or in Greece the transition to democracy will be accomplished peacefully—if it is accomplished at all. Ironically, these two dictatorships have made great economic progress, although this is of course no guarantee of stability. Sweden, and to a lesser extent Norway and Denmark, are affected by deep internal discontent and even in the Benelux countries domestic crisis has become a frequent occurrence. Finally, signs of disintegration have emerged in Yugoslavia, and the question of who and what will follow Tito on the political scene agitates both the Yugoslavs and their neighbors.

An optimist would argue that domestic crises of the kind prevalent in Europe today are part of the normal democratic process. The Labour party, such a person would contend, will ultimately say yes to Europe; Italy will somehow muddle through; Brandt, Heath, and Pompidou realize the need for closer European collaboration; and, given both time and the Soviet Union's preoccupation with China, there is no serious danger that Europe will fall apart.

All this may be so, but the truth is that Europe lives on borrowed time. For reasons I have indicated previously in these pages,[†] closer European economic cooperation is an immediate, not a long-range, imperative. The continent's present economic strength is deceptive, and can easily degenerate. In the area of foreign and defense policy, Europe has shown an inertia and in some cases a shortsightedness and a paralysis of will which are truly alarming. Senator Mansfield's complaint is after all justified: why should 250 million people, possessing great industrial resources and a long military experience, be unable to organize an effective military coalition to defend themselves?

Not that there is anything basically wrong with Chancellor Brandt's *Ostpolitik*; the agreements with Russia and Poland should have been

* *Europe since Hitler*, 1970.

† "The Fall of Europe?," January 1972.

signed long ago, and in some ways the *Ostpolitik* does not even go far enough. But if the policy itself is sound, the illusions engendered by it should give pause; Brandt himself and some of his colleagues have encouraged such illusions by speaking in terms of a historical turning point in European affairs and by predicting a radical improvement in East-West relations. Yet there is no reason to assume that the *Ostpolitik* will bring about a "real détente," or will help resolve the existing conflicts of interest in Europe. As far as France is concerned, Prime Minister Pompidou and his ministers profess to favor closer European cooperation, and they certainly fear the withdrawal of American troops from Europe, but at the same time they want others to pay the price of unity; the protection of French agriculture is still a more important consideration to them. As it was under de Gaulle, France continues to be the main stumbling block on the road to European unity. The defense policy of the Scandinavian countries has more in common with *Alice in Wonderland* than with reality. Sweden still earnestly insists on neutrality, though it has virtually given up the attempt to make its neutrality credible. Iceland's only contribution to NATO has been the U.S. base at Keflavik which it now is asking to have removed. Denmark spends little more than 2 per cent of its GNP on defense and the ruling Social Democrats want a drastic reduction in that amount. These neutralist leanings would make sense if there were no political pressure and no military threat. But the Scandinavian countries are in fact under constant pressure from the Soviet Union, which has established in the Murmansk-Kola region what the Norwegian minister of defense has called "the world's mightiest complex of bases." Warsaw Pact superiority in the Baltic Sea is five to one and still growing. The Soviet Union has a most impressive naval task force standing by year-round between the coast of Norway and the north of Scotland—neither for fishing nor, in view of the inclement weather, for reasons of health.

The "Scandinavian syndrome" is reflected in Western Europe's attitude to the Soviet proposal for a European Security Conference, the principle of which has now also been accepted by the United States. If the Soviet intention were détente—a reduction of armaments, an agreement on the inviolability of existing borders, collective security, a repudiation of the threat or use of force, promotion of trade, and so on—no sane person could object. The Russians already have treaties with France and Germany providing for these aims, and they could have similar agreements in a matter of days with every other European country.

But Soviet intentions are a little more ambitious; the Russians do not merely want, as they maintain, to transform relations among European states in order "to help overcome the divi-

sion of the continent into military-political groupings." On the contrary, they want to strengthen the cohesion of the Warsaw Pact countries while keeping Western Europe disunited. They argue that the Communist countries constitute a "natural" bloc, tied together by ideological, economic, and other ties, while the non-Communist countries of Europe have no such common interests and their unity is therefore "artificial." The overriding long-term aim of a European conference as far as the Russians are concerned is not just collective security but a lasting peace on their terms—a Pax Sovietica. Not for a moment do the Soviets contemplate dissolving the Warsaw Pact.

Indeed, the very notion of a European conference has been befogged to such an extent by empty and misleading slogans that one may doubt whether it will prove a proper forum for discussing concrete problems like a balanced reduction of armed forces. At best, as the *Economist* has observed, the European conference promises to be a bore, a sort of mini-UN assembly in which weary politicians exchange weary platitudes. At worst, it could offer the Soviet Union an opening for an aggressively expansionist policy with regard to Western Europe. The whole affair may in the long run be of no consequence. But it demonstrates very clearly the weakness of Western Europe, its inability to take the initiative, to assert its interests, to shape a common policy. The problem facing Western Europe is one of survival, of maintaining its security and independence in the face of the gradual American retreat from globalism. The notion that Western Europe has a major part to play in the new concert of powers is simply unrealistic.

IV

CHINA, in contrast to Japan and Western Europe, is a factor of major importance in the new "international system," not as a global power but certainly within the Asian framework. It offers, as I have remarked, a striking illustration of the fact that economic performance does not count for much as a criterion of political power. For a fairly long time the world has been treated to accounts of the marvelous achievements of Chinese workers and peasants, the wise and farsighted policy of Chinese leaders, the incredible accomplishments of barefoot Chinese scientists. These claims are by now wearing a little thin. Mao and his colleagues have been in power for almost a quarter-of-a-century, yet economically China is still a very backward country. It prides itself on steel production—21 million tons in 1971 (incidentally this is one of the few figures published)—but the capacity to produce 22 million tons existed ten years ago. China's grain harvest in 1971 was 245

million tons, which is less than in 1958, despite the fact that the population has grown by many millions since then. Oil production (about 25 million tons) is small by any standards and will limit the scope of economic expansion in coming years. With a per-capita annual income of about \$145 China is still among the poorest countries in the world.

Yet unlike Japan and Western Europe, China has given absolute priority to defense. It staged its first atomic test in October 1964 and its first full-scale thermonuclear test in June 1967, thus doing in less than three years what took the French eight to accomplish. In April 1970 the Chinese launched their first satellite, with twice the payload of Sputnik 1. They began building ICBM's in 1965; although progress has not been as fast as expected, they were able by 1972 to deploy a handful of new missiles with a range of up to 2,500 miles (Moscow is less than that distance from Chinese soil).

It is not known whether a preemptive nuclear strike against China has ever been seriously considered in Moscow. But there is no doubt that the Chinese threat figures very prominently in Soviet thought; forty-four Soviet divisions are believed to be presently deployed along the Chinese borders. The propaganda image of the Chinese enemy (in contrast to the American) is that of a tough and ruthless fighter, inflexible, one who will not hesitate to use any devious stratagem, any weapon to achieve his aim. However, Soviet leaders seem to be counting on a lack of stability inside China. That Mao and his colleagues might be replaced by a pro-Soviet clique is probably beyond their wildest dreams. But it is not at all impossible that in a struggle for power among rival contenders, and in view of the tensions already existing between the army and the party (and within the party and army), not to mention other centrifugal trends (China's twenty-eight regions in many respects pursue divergent policies), China might again be paralyzed as it was during the Cultural Revolution. Such a development would not, of course, remove the "Chinese danger" altogether, but it

would certainly reduce its urgency and would enable the Soviet Union to pursue a more energetic foreign policy elsewhere. Peking's influence on the world Communist movement is likely to shrink as the strictly national components in Chinese Communism become more prominent; the appeal of Maoism outside China (and outside the Chinese diaspora) was always based to a certain degree on a misunderstanding.

Nevertheless, whatever happens on the domestic scene, China will still be the most populous country on earth and its military strength cannot be ignored. It will figure prominently in the political calculations of Russia, Japan, and India. But it will not be a global power for a long time to come.

THE American retreat from globalism unquestionably creates a new situation. The balance of power is indeed changing—but not toward multipolarity. While America is in retreat, the Soviet Union still has a globalist policy. As the U.S. opts for disengagement, the Soviet Union increases its commitments. To this extent, regardless of America's economic performance and strategic might, the Soviet Union is now in a superior position. Nor is the hypothesis warranted that new centers of power are about to emerge. A world power (let alone a "superpower") must be capable of asserting its interests and purposes beyond its borders, yet with all their economic resources and military potential, Western Europe and Japan are not only lacking in that capacity, but in the area of defense they are even more dependent on outside help than Australia or Brazil. It is uncertain that they will succeed in weathering the coming storms once the American umbrella is removed from over their heads.

There is, in short, no multipolar system emerging, unless one takes the term as a euphemism for the spread of confusion, or possibly chaos. The American retreat is causing new power vacuums in the world. How they will be filled, and who will fill them, is the great question of the decades to come.

On the Love of Suicide

Renee Winegarten

AMONG the numerous ancient and modern proponents of self-destruction discussed in A. Alvarez's brilliant, controversial, and moving study of suicide, *The Savage God*,* the name of one distinctly odd but celebrated figure who has fascinated French writers is missing. It is that of Proteus Peregrinos, a Cynic philosopher who announced without any apparent cause that he intended to burn himself to death at the forthcoming Olympic games, and who, after declaiming his own funeral oration, proceeded to do so. There is something about the self-delusion of Peregrinos that finds an answering echo in the modern spirit with its tendency to play with fire.

Reading Alvarez's book one is struck by the extent to which he himself, as poet and critic, is committed not only to the rehabilitation of suicide, but also to the Romantic aesthetic of the poet as willing sacrificial victim. Indeed, the view he expresses in his latest book elaborates the standpoint of his collected essays, *Beyond All This Fiddle*, where he proposed the desirability of what he aptly called extremism in art. Given the pressure of the modern crisis—extermination camps, atrocities, the possibility of nuclear destruction—the argument runs, the true, controlled, and serious artist (as distinct from the self-indulgent member of the vapid avant-garde) is forced into the role of scapegoat. "He pursues his insights to the edge of breakdown and then beyond it," into the realm of mania, depression, paranoia, hallucination. Such an artist readily "puts himself at risk and explores his own vulnerability . . . under certain conditions of stress, a great work of art is a kind of suicide."

The artist worthy of the name thus assumes the challenging and dangerous role of spiritual mountaineer in a world otherwise hostile or indifferent to heroism. He is engaged in some perilous inner voyage of discovery on which he has staked his very sanity and his life itself. He is committed to "psychic exploration out along that friable edge that divides the tolerable from the intolerable. . . ." Each person shapes his ideal

in his own image, and Alvarez likes mountaineering.

In *The Savage God* Alvarez's attitude appears highly personal, largely discursive, and historical rather than critical. The book, opening with a disturbing memoir of the poet Sylvia Plath who took her own life in 1963, and ending with a touching account of the author's failure to do away with himself, contains within these poles enough themes for several volumes embracing different disciplines. I wish here to examine only one of those themes: the concept of art as a suicidal activity. How has this concept arisen? Has it indeed become dominant? What are its implications? To attempt to answer will entail visiting some of the same landmarks Alvarez does, though not with the same Baedeker.

WHILE, before the growth of Romanticism, the poet often had a high conception of his art as a divine gift or as a means of acquiring or granting immortal fame, he did not see it as a substitute religion. When Matthew Arnold wrote that "most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry," he was projecting into the future something that was already taking place. In an important article written in 1924, the French critic Jacques Rivière remarked on the extent to which the idea of literature had been "permeated or contaminated by the idea of religion since the period of Romanticism. If the problem of the possibility and the limits of literature assumes such a tragic character today, to my mind, it is because it has taken over the place and the form of religion."

One consequence of this phenomenon was that the poet saw himself in the role of priest. What use are poets in an age unpropitious to poetry?, inquired Hölderlin, who ended incurably insane. They are like holy priests of the wine god, he declared. But even more than they resembled dedicated priests, they were voluntary or involuntary sacrificial victims, scapegoats, martyrs. That early arbiter of Romantic tendencies and attitudes, Friedrich Schlegel, wrote: "Do not go and waste in politics faith and love, but, in the divine world of science and of art, offer up your

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*Random House, 299 pp., \$7.95.

most intimate being as a sacrifice so that the sacred fire of culture may consume it."

That call to self-sacrifice for art, uttered between 1798 and 1800, would be only too widely obeyed. Especially as it was assumed that the artist was another death-conquering Orpheus or some kind of phoenix who would miraculously rise from the ashes. According to the poet-philosopher Nietzsche (who like the favorite poet of his youth, Hölderlin, would collapse in madness), one must be willing to burn in one's own flame, and be reduced to ashes, as a necessary prerequisite for rebirth. Self-destruction was somehow to be a means of access to a higher plane or new creativity. (The idea that self-destructiveness or immersion in death can be sources of creative energy may be found in Alvarez's writings on Keats as well as on Sylvia Plath.) Nietzsche's Zarathustra professed a special love for those who did not spare themselves, and proclaimed that he esteemed only those works where the artist wrote in blood: "Write in blood, and thou shalt learn that blood is spirit," he affirmed.

It was Goethe in his seventies who, chatting with Eckermann in 1824, recalled that like the pelican he had fed with the blood of his own young heart his novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, which fifty years before had given the signal for one of the recurring vogues of suicide. The same image of the poet as pelican, the bird that according to legend offers its heart's blood to feed the hungry, and an old emblem of Christ, was developed by Alfred de Musset in one of his best-known poems, where his Muse proposed that the most despairing songs are the most beautiful.

In his Olympian maturity Goethe had come to dread the very idea of experiencing again the strange state of mind in which he had composed *Werther*. At the same time, however, he felt that the novel depicted a widespread and insoluble human dilemma, by no means limited to a personal case, and that it could arise whenever the sensitive individual was frustrated by "the narrow limits of an antiquated world."

But perhaps the poet who responded most keenly to the theme of poetic martyrdom was the disdainful aristocrat Alfred de Vigny. He projected his own lofty sensibility onto the hero of his play *Chatterton* (1835), based on the suicide of the "marvelous boy," a drama which in turn echoed a wave of solitary pistol shots. Vigny's *Chatterton* is told, "You will always be somebody's martyr," and along with all those endowed with a special kind of creative imagination, he is "crucified" by an uncomprehending world. And Vigny spoke of "the perpetual martyrdom and perpetual immolation of the Poet." Here it is not so much the deliberate choice of self-immolation envisaged by Friedrich Schlegel, the Peregrinos pattern consecrated by the moderns, so much as the martyrdom inflicted by a com-

placent, hateful, and unjust society, to which Goethe had alluded when, in connection with Werther's fate, he spoke of the failure of the aspiring individual to adapt to "the narrow limits of an antiquated world." (Both these elements, the voluntary self-sacrifice and the sacrifice exacted by a terrible hostile world, are to be found in Alvarez's evaluation of the modern poet's predicament.)

Discussing the poetic dilemma, Vigny distinguished between the rare poetic type on the one hand, and on the other the man of letters or the great writer who, he felt, were perfectly able to fend for themselves. The poetic nature represented by his Chatterton—and, by extension, himself—is more vulnerable than these. In this kind of poet, imagination, not vulgar reality, is dominant. Already for Vigny, in revolt against divine injustice, the pull of the imagination has metaphysical undertones. Imagination sweeps the poet's faculties toward the unknown: "Sublime flight toward unknown worlds, you become the unconquerable inclination of his spirit!" But at the same time, in Vigny's opinion, the poet is doomed from birth. The "bad fairy" who presides over his cradle is Poetry herself. Thus, for Vigny and his heirs, the gifts of poetry are ambivalent: they close the doors of this world while opening those that appear to beckon toward some higher state or revelation.

A MERE thirty-five years later and the legendary doomed "accursed poet" himself appeared on the scene in person: Arthur Rimbaud, the aggressive adolescent who would have no truck with God or received religion, and who was determined to go to the very end of everything, regardless of the consequences. He gave his poetic procedure for becoming a seer through the derangement of all the senses in the much-quoted letter of May 1871, where the poet is to embrace sickness, suffering, and madness for the sake of reaching "the unknown." To be sure, this program (echoed in Alvarez's description of the extremist poet pursuing his insights beyond breakdown) is no soft option. It is a form of martyrdom, a crucifixion willingly undergone for the purpose of seeing his hallucinations and visions. Rimbaud would become one of the saints of the modern poetic canon, and one of the cult figures of our day. Desultory attempts have been made to dislodge this astonishing prodigy, whose poetic peak was achieved between the years of seventeen and twenty, and who then fell from his hubristic poetic assault on the heavens (by way of hell) into the mute and brutish materialism of a trader in Abyssinia.

This urge to risk going to the very limit of one's experiences (even if it meant madness and actual, or virtual, suicide) for the sake of returning with light from "the unknown" was clearly dependent upon the conviction that the power

of the imagination was superior to that of mere reason. It was, in short, the continuation of the debate between intuition and control, instinct and obligation, the confrontation between rationalism and anti-rationalism which in the 18th century had been expressed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau when he made Saint-Preux and Lord Édouard Bomston propose the arguments for and against suicide in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Goethe's novel, too, in which the frustrated dreamer Werther and his friend, the more prosaic Albert, respectively justify and refute the claims of suicide, belongs in this debate. It is as if suicide were the test case. But by the time one has come to Rimbaud, writing roughly a century after *Werther*, the situation has grown exacerbated. Anti-rationalism in the form of extreme demands upon the imagination now betokens violent reaction against the excesses of positivism and the exaggerated trust in science and material progress. Despite our disillusion or lip service to disillusion with technological advancement, a century after Rimbaud we are still largely both intellectually and emotionally involved in the dilemma occasioned by that movement of action and reaction.

As the sonorous Victor Hugo with his middle-aged passion for Kabbalah and spiritualism expressed the clash between rationalism and anti-rationalism in his posthumously published poem, *Dieu*, the average man rejects the excessive desire to know, discover, and "go to the end," while the poet longs to unite earth with heaven, the ideal with the real, and catch a glimpse of unknown worlds. Elsewhere, Victor Hugo distinguished between what he called normal consciousness and the lure of the abyss. "Every man . . . is free to go or not to go upon that frightening promontory of thought from which one peers into darkness. If he goes not, he remains within ordinary life, within the domain of normal consciousness. . . . For internal peace, this is obviously the best. If he ventures upon those heights he is taken captive. The deep waves of the supernatural have appeared to him. No man can view that ocean with impunity. . . . He will not renounce that fatally alluring abyss, that sounding of the unexplored deep, that indifference to the earth and to life, that entry into the forbidden, that effort to feel the impalpable and to see the invisible. He comes back to it again and again, he leans and bends over it. . . ." And sometimes he fails to draw back, falls, and destroys himself.

The poet thus appears in the role of Hamlet tempted toward the abyss. In Shakespeare's play the possibility is envisaged that the apparition may be some diabolic spirit intending to tempt the sweet prince to the cliff top and draw him into madness. On the cliff top we are still with Alvarez's imagery of the climb and the edge, the dizzy height or fall. Faust tells Mephistopheles

how much he desires the abyss. There is surely a Satanic element in the urge to plunge to self-destruction in the quest for some unknown revelation, an element which Romantic poets from Byron onward, hypnotized by the reversal of values in Satanic revolt, found it so difficult to resist. They were haunted by the frenzied ride to the abyss. And Nietzsche's Zarathustra, conjuring from the depths his "abysmal thought"—"Mine abyss speaketh"—utters first a cry of triumph and then a cry of horror.

FOR many the cry of horror would come too late: they would be dashed on the rocks below. Contemplating this tragedy in Russia, Dostoevsky, with his deep prophetic insight into the dark temptations of the floundering modern spirit, stood appalled. Suicide (as Alvarez points out) was a subject he could not leave alone. But then Dostoevsky's obsessive concern with suicide provides the key to his analysis of the moral sickness of the modern world.

For Dostoevsky suicide was the outward manifestation of an inner disease, the disease of self-will (which for Nietzsche, who acknowledged his debt to the Russian novelist, would be the supreme virtue). Suicide was the logical consequence of Satanic revolt and despair occasioned by the denial of God. Self-destruction implied the rejection of the divinely-ordered universe, with its insistence on choice, humility, and redemption through suffering. It meant the arrogant exaltation of human will in place of submission to divine will. Moreover, it signified that Russians had lost their roots through adopting false, foreign, socialist theories alien to their true, deeply mystic, and Orthodox natures. What Dostoevsky was fighting within himself as well as in the world was the power of negation that had overwhelmed him personally at the time of his dazzling début. The force of negation remained so strong within him that he felt only devotion to the person of the Redeemer could save him.

In his novels and the journalism of his *Diary of a Writer*, Dostoevsky analyzed various forms of suicide, including the despairing indignation of the embittered soul in revolt against the "absurdity" of the universe. To illustrate this he chose the tragic example of Alexander Herzen's young daughter, who left an outrageously flip-pant note. This instance reveals, it is true, the less attractive side of Dostoevsky's character, since it shows him riding his hobby-horse, his reiterated belief that the sins of the intellectuals of Herzen's generation were visited on their children. Such suicides, Dostoevsky implied, were the ruinous consequences of mistaken modern ideas, atheism, and rootlessness.

While a number of Dostoevsky's characters end in self-destruction, perhaps the most compelling

of his suicides is the engineer Kirillov, a character who only took shape in the last stages of planning *The Possessed*, and whose rootlessness is of such a degree that he speaks Russian ungrammatically. Kirillov (whose article on the increase of suicides in Russia anticipates Dostoevsky's journalism in the *Diary*) is the tragic embodiment of modern self-will. According to Kirillov's crazed logic: "If God exists, all is His will. . . . If not, it's all my will. . . . I am bound to shoot myself because the highest point of my self-will is to kill myself with my own hands." To be the first to kill himself to prove that man is God, is Kirillov's intention: "To recognize that there is no God and not to recognize at the same instant that one is God oneself is an absurdity. . . . But one, the first, must kill himself, for who else will begin and prove it? . . . For three years I've been seeking for the attribute of my god-head and I've found it; the attribute of my god-head is self-will! . . . I am killing myself to prove . . . my new terrible freedom."

We recognize the serious assessment of modern pretensions that Dostoevsky intends to make through Kirillov's frigid frenzy. After all, Nietzsche's Zarathustra will teach: "Die at the right time. . . . My death I commend unto you, free death, that cometh unto me because *I* will." And the intemperate Antonin Artaud, who suffered long spells of madness, confined in mental hospitals, declared: "By suicide, I reintroduce my design in nature, I shall for the first time give things the shape of my will." Much impressed by Dostoevsky, Camus took his point of departure from the Russian novelist when he opened *The Myth of Sisyphus* with the observation that suicide was the one really serious philosophical problem.

Yet alongside the high seriousness, there is also a grating satirical intent in *The Possessed*. This aspect is reinforced by the reactions of the repellent intriguer, Peter Stepanovich, who needs Kirillov's suicide for his own ends, and who, kept on tenterhooks, mutters to himself now (in relief) that the madman will do it, now (in frustration) that he won't. Human pretensions, Dostoevsky would imply, are at once tragic and grotesque.

How accurate Dostoevsky's prophecy was can be seen in two Nietzschean literary suicides who would probably have horrified Nietzsche: one, John Davidson, a minor *fin-de-siècle* poet; the other, Harry Crosby, a wealthy American expatriate in the Paris of the 20's. Forestalling the Futurists, John Davidson sought to undo the past and throw all values into the crucible. One of the earliest of Nietzsche's disciples in Britain, Davidson could not reconcile himself to the human condition, wanted to remake the world in his own image, and longed by his own sovereign will to "win the heaven of eternal night." He disappeared in the waters off Cornwall in 1909.

As for Harry Crosby, he admired Rimbaud and Nietzsche (quoting "Die at the right time . . .") and was obsessed by what he called the Sun Death. Deeply scarred by the 1914-18 war, he "set himself the goal of going crazy in order to become a genius," wrote Malcolm Cowley, who added: "Out of his reading came the idea that . . . the highest expression of the self was in the act of self-annihilation . . . that ecstasy was to be attained at any price—death was the last ecstasy . . . life itself might be transformed into a work of art rising to a splendid climax—'to die at the right time.' His suicide would be the last debauch, the final extravagance, the boldest act of sex, the supreme gesture of defiance to the world he despised." His dream of making his suicide a work of art ended in a New York hotel in 1929 when he took his own life after shooting a young married socialite.

HARRY CROSBY with his violent and pathetic *hubris* was a contemporary of the Surrealists in their first period, who issued out of the total nihilism and despairing destructiveness of Dada. He lacked, however, the grim "humor" of one of the heroes of the Surrealists, Jacques Vaché, an opium addict who committed suicide by taking an overdose, having first administered a similar amount to an innocent companion as a practical joke. The panjandrum of the Surrealists, André Breton, had known Vaché personally and always acknowledged his indebtedness to the wag who, from nihilist disgust and a desire to achieve total freedom, deliberately flouted all rational norms of behavior. Because it fulfilled their ideal of sheer gratuitousness, Vaché's combination of murder and suicide could not be condemned by the Surrealists. There was reason for unreason and method in this madness.

The Surrealists were aiming deliberately at the destruction of reason and logic, the removal of all aesthetic and moral considerations. They represented the final flowering of the reaction against reason that manifested itself in the 18th century, and Breton admitted that they were "the tail" of Romanticism. Indebted to the discoveries of Freud, they insisted on the supremacy of chance and imagination, hence their concern with automatic writing, with spontaneity of expression and deed, with everything that lay beyond the control of the rational mind. "It is not fear of madness that will force us to furl the flag of imagination," wrote Breton, who advocated the simulation of madness as a form of expression.

Clearly, it is one thing for the poet to endure the sacred privilege of being driven insane by Apollo, and another for him to cultivate or pretend insanity for the purpose of art or higher revelation. Similarly, it is one thing for the poet to transmute his pain and suffering into poetic form, and another for him deliberately to seek

out agonies with this end in view. Feeling, not analysis, was king, though the extremes of both may surely be regarded as forms of tyranny. There must be no barriers to experience. Above all, what Breton desired was the elimination of all contradictions between "waking and sleeping (reality and dream), reason and madness, objectivity and subjectivity, perception and representation, . . . and indeed, life and death."

It is scarcely surprising, then, that one of the early activities of the Surrealists was the organization of a symposium on suicide. "We live, we die. What is the share of the will in all this? It seems that we kill ourselves the way we dream. It is not a moral question we are asking: *is suicide a solution?*" We kill ourselves the way we dream: the frontiers of life and death were becoming blurred. Which was which? Could one be sure? Did it matter? In the midst of life we are in death: perhaps in the midst of death we are in life, even if this is not meant in a strictly religious sense?

So the Surrealists seem to have felt. In his answer to the questionnaire, the handsome René Crevel, who suffered from tuberculosis and would later kill himself, declared: "Those men commit suicide who reject the quasi-universal cowardice of struggling against a certain spiritual sensation so intense that it must be taken, until further notice, as a sensation of truth. Only this sensation permits the acceptance of the most obviously just and definitive of solutions: *suicide*." Here is expressed, in a kind of spiritual atheism or perversion of religious ideas, the notion that one can somehow courageously find a greater spiritual truth in self-destruction than in life.

This was one consequence of the charms with which the Romantic poets had invested death. Those poets who could say with Keats that they were "half in love with easeful Death," who were actually longing for death, or who felt that only in death could sublimity be experienced, are echoed by the elegant and vacuous Jacques Rigaut, a drug addict whose suicide so fascinated his friend, once an associate of the Surrealists, the future suicide, Drieu La Rochelle. Rigaut declared: ". . . I'm on death's side." One of the early Surrealist leaders, the poet Paul Éluard, said that his entire living being "aspired to the majesty of death."

How far André Breton went in confusing the frontiers of life and death in the name of a higher reality or "surreality" can be grasped in such pronouncements as: "And if you die, aren't you sure to awake among the dead?" "Surrealism will admit you into death which is a secret society." "It is living and ceasing to live which are imaginary solutions. Existence lies elsewhere." These observations can be found in the first Surrealist manifesto of 1924, and must have fulfilled a deep need that had arisen in the ruin of all values. Yet how romantically perverse it was to suppose

that, without faith and works, death could provide spiritual answers (or indeed any answers) that life could not.

SUCH death-intoxicated notions, the culmination of the long "romantic agony," have penetrated deep. So much so that they are the cause of a certain critical unease and uncertainty, for it is widely accepted that the poet is not quite as other men, that his gift may well exact a high price. To a certain extent, Alvarez's views would seem to benefit from this tradition. But the extremist always has to go one better than his predecessor. Alvarez can justify what he calls, none too happily, the highbrow arts: "They survive morally by becoming, in one way or another, an imitation of death in which their audience can share. To achieve this the artist, in his role of scapegoat, finds himself testing out his own death and vulnerability for and on himself."

Meanwhile, he candidly admits that this is taking place in an age when artists are consumed by doubt about their position and value in the world. The prestige of risk is dazzling indeed. But do we in fact demand so much of our artists, or does it make them feel more important to think so? Are they not like children shouting for attention when grown-ups decline to give it? Suicide is understood to be one way of proving sincerity and claiming attention. Camus quotes one modern Peregrinos who went so far as to kill himself in order to get his book noticed: "Attention was certainly attracted, but the book was judged bad."

What has happened is that Alvarez has taken the models he especially admires (Robert Lowell—whose treatment of nervous breakdown in *Life Studies* encouraged Sylvia Plath to pursue "taboo subjects"—or John Berryman and Ted Hughes with their extremes of violence), and has elevated their aesthetic into a pattern for high modern art. Yet there seems a kind of falsity and pretentiousness in the poet's attempt to relive and "manipulate"—as did Sylvia Plath—the terrible extreme experience of others (for instance in extermination camps or in Hiroshima), for the sake of art. It may well be that, up to a certain point, writers can only write in the way they do write. If that is so, then it is just as well for the critic not to try to mold their tastes and insights into a poetic ideal or standard. There exists more than one kind of art which merits the title to high seriousness.

The concept of art as a suicidal activity, then, like the despairing suicidal impulses of individuals, should be seen as a persistent, recurring, obsessive temptation rather than as the dominating factor in modern artistic movements. While we have no desire to return to the era when suicides were buried at the crossroads with stakes driven through their bodies, any more than

we wish to deny the enlargement of sensibility once engendered by Romanticism and its heirs, we ought at this stage to perceive the dangers of the trend to aesthetic self-immolation, dangers surely outweighing the perverse glamor which any extremist doctrine or position always seems to radiate. This trend would inevitably, if pursued to its logical conclusion, bring about the end of the arts whose ultimate justification it claims to be. The combat would cease for want of combatants.

Must art swing between extremes? Must one reject the gift of reason—for it is a gift as much as the imagination—and must one hope in vain

for equilibrium? The idea that the awful state of the world, its cruelty and evil, the possibility of its imminent end, actually require the deliberate risk of madness or self-destruction on the part of the artist seems to me a high-sounding fallacy. The options available to the artist, even today, need not be so limited as Alvarez would suggest. For a start, the artist might reexamine and query received notions about his role. Instead of trying to "come to terms" with inner or outer violence, he might contemplate opposing it. And, insofar as he is able, he might consider resisting so vain and self-defeating a role as that of Peregrinos.

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Encyclopaedia Judaica

Chaim Raphael

ENCYCLOPAEDIA JUDAICA* has a truly magisterial aim. In sixteen large volumes—11,000 pages and more than 11 million words—it sets out to survey the whole of Jewish experience from the most far-off times to the present day, analyzing, expounding, and assessing the religious faith of the Jews, their social and economic life in every part of the world, the ideas they have generated both for themselves and those around them, their sense of kinship as a people, and their endless variety individually. To be coolly factual on all this in a straight work of reference would be hard enough, but the approach also has to embrace elements that transcend facts, above all a sense of wonder and paradox. Here is a people obsessed with material problems, yet full of dreams; avid for change, brilliant at innovation, yet clinging to the past; longing to become unnoticed, yet refusing to disappear; the eternal victim—the eternal survivor. The encyclopedia itself becomes a paradox. Its subject may be a small people, but the canvas is of Western man. The Jews are peripheral but at the heart of things, absorbed in each background yet rising out of it to express the most generalized spiritual problems of humanity. It started in the Bible; it is equally evident today; and it is the hallmark of Jewish experience in many of the ages in between.

All this must somehow emerge from a great Jewish encyclopedia. But there is something else, too, that one expects from such a work, linked to the moment in time at which it appears. At the technical level, the major articles of an encyclopedia must harness the latest products of scholarship in a way which breaks new ground. In some cases the originality will lie in the distilling of a unified presentation from a heterogeneous mass of material familiar to experts but never summarized before in simplified form. In other cases a contributor may be using this occasion to present the fruits of his own study and outlook in a manner never hitherto attempted, so that all future discussion of the

subject must take note of it as an independently original statement. In both these approaches (which can overlap of course) *Encyclopaedia Judaica* frequently scores full marks.

But there is also a psychological side to the breaking of new ground. An encyclopedia acquires a status beyond its character as a reference work if its appearance corresponds to some great turning-point in consciousness. The editors have to feel that they are living in an age of momentous change for which thinkers and scholars must provide a coherent record and a sustaining philosophy. The wide-ranging form of an encyclopedia gives them the means to reevaluate the received ideas on every aspect of their subject, to reexamine the past from a new and “free” point of view, to systematize the experience of their generation not “for reference” but as a step toward establishing a new outlook. The historic example of this approach is the great French encyclopedia of the 18th century. In the field of Jewish experience, something of the same intensity emerges in this new encyclopedia from Israel.

It is therefore as a great concept that one first salutes *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. In a work on this scale there will undoubtedly be mistakes, inconsistencies, and inadequacies, but to dwell on them in the first instance would be to miss the positive aspects of what is a truly heroic enterprise. Its production standards alone are quite first-rate: printing and binding are outstanding, and there are 8,000 illustrations, a great many in superb color. The original editor-in-chief, Cecil Roth, died in 1970 while the work was still in progress, and to complete it in time must have posed extraordinary problems for his successor, Geoffrey Wigoder, and the large team assembled in Jerusalem. It is a great tribute to Israel that a technical achievement of this quality could be carried through so successfully. But transcending the technical achievement is its spiritual meaning: that there was the will, among those concerned, to meet the needs of world Jewry at this time with a work of this kind.†

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* Macmillan, \$500.

† Although originating in Israel, and using some material drawn from an incompleting *Encyclopaedia Judaica* in German and a more general encyclopedia in Hebrew, this new *Encyclopaedia Judaica* has been produced solely in the English language.

For the new encyclopedia, in its broadest aspect, rises to the challenge of documenting for all of us the revolutionary changes in Jewish consciousness through which we are living. The basic elements are familiar enough. At one extreme is the unspeakable horror of the Holocaust, utterly evil in itself but all-powerful too in the reassessment it forces us to make of what was implicit in the earlier story of Jew-hatred. At the other extreme, we have seen the emergence of the Jew, in the State of Israel, as master of his fate, a story of heroism which again carries with it a reevaluation of history. Within the compass of these two dramas alone, the idea of being a Jew seems to need redefinition. But the issue is even more complicated than that. There is no stable or simple position for Jews in the fact that the Holocaust is "over," and a free homeland in existence. The post-Holocaust Diaspora has thrown up old problems in new forms. In Israel a new people, now almost half native-born, is still bound with indissoluble links to world Jewry and its past, but is at the same time motivated by social, cultural, and political pressures which sit uncomfortably with Diaspora experience. The kinship is still paramount, especially at moments of danger, but the easy answers have disappeared.

For Jews everywhere, then, there is a feeling of living in an era of massive change and there is a thirst for guidance on how to make sense of it all—both the old traditions and the new forms of being a Jew. The sources to draw on are now immense. For the distant past, archeological discovery has opened up a new understanding of Jewish origins. For later periods, scholars have immeasurably deepened traditional Hebrew studies, and created a new approach to the study of Jewish social history. For the Holocaust and its background, the documentation is enormous, almost unassimilable. For the State of Israel, and for the historic issues of Jewish life, philosophers, linguists, historians, political scientists, economists, and sociologists have been laboring in their highly specialized fields. It is a perfect moment in time, and Israel is the perfect place, for the distillation of so much new experience and new knowledge in the form of an encyclopedia.

ONE has to turn back seventy years to find a parallel phenomenon, less dramatic outwardly but in fact equally appropriate to its time, and equally inevitable in its place of provenance. In 1901, a great *Jewish Encyclopaedia* began to be produced in the United States. Publication of its massive twelve volumes was completed by 1906, and in the years since then it has been of incalculable benefit and interest to innumerable readers. With the old *JE*, as with the new encyclopedia from Israel,

the dominant urge was literary and intellectual, but with full realization of an underlying social purpose.

Both old and new encyclopedias struggle to emerge from Jewish history with some sense of optimism, but the terms are very different. In those far-off days at the turn of the century, the idea still persisted that hatred and persecution of the Jews were to a great extent simply a function of ignorance. The Jews had been shut off from the mainstream of Western life, through calumny, superstition, and contempt. The image of the Jew—poor, ignorant, abject, but often at the same time rich, clever, and powerful—could be refashioned through a scientifically accurate account of the positive, healthy aspects of his tradition, which showed how able he was, when "modernized," to become a natural part of Western life. If this were done, in the background of the liberalism to which the world now seemed committed, the barriers of hate would finally come down. The truth, in the form of an encyclopedia, would set men free.

It is significant that the prime architect of the old *JE*, a European journalist now largely forgotten named Isidore Singer, had come to his great conception while working in Paris at the time of the Dreyfus affair. Editor of a news-sheet which tried to rebut anti-Semitism, he saw the solution in terms of reason and argument. Theodor Herzl, as we know, reacted very differently, seeing the Dreyfus eruption as additional proof of his view that the Jews could never have fully normal relations with non-Jews without a homeland of their own. But to Isidore Singer, as he explained in a Preface to the first volume of the *JE* when it finally appeared, there was a valid and original way to normalize the Diaspora. The new encyclopedia, he said, would illuminate the internal traditions to which the Jews were so attached, but would also set them in a general world context:

In their dispersion [the Jews] are cosmopolitan, both as to their conceptions of world-duty and their participation in the general advancement of mankind. To exhibit both sides of their character has been one of the objects of the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*.

If one were to put faith, as a Jew, in the power of liberalism, the United States, with its gates open to the hordes of downtrodden immigrants from Czarist Russia, stood out symbolically as the New Jerusalem from which the truth of Jewish life could go forth. But if the New World provided the base, the heart of the matter still lay in Europe. There had been a revolution there in Jewish scholarship, more powerful in some ways than the discoveries hailed in our own time. To open up its results in systematic

form to the world at large would not only work wonders on non-Jews; it would generate a new pride among the Jews themselves, giving them normality and self-respect.

It is no denigration of the new encyclopedia from Israel to say that the old *JE*, supremely successful in expressing this new scholarship, achieved through it a freshness and originality which subsequent publications cannot easily recapture. These qualities were the result of two extraordinary forces coming together with rich effect: on the one side, the fantastic intellectual potential of young Jews trained in the rabbinic tradition, with a vast range of material that they carried virtually in their heads; and on the other, the proximity to them of "German" scholarship, which had opened up dramatically so many fields cognate to their interests—language, law, the ancient world, archeology, folklore, and history. The *JE* expressed all this: the whole of Jewish experience was translated, as it were, into Western modes of thought.

Encyclopaedia Judaica builds on this process. The fact that it can take the underlying principle for granted leaves it, in some fields, without the sense of breakthrough which came with the first steps in this direction. But there are compensations, as becomes apparent in the contrasting ways in which the two encyclopedias deal with the problems of Bible scholarship.

ANY discussion of Jewish experience has to ground itself on an attitude to the Bible. The *JE* was very conscious that it had to formulate a new position on the issue. In the foreground were the startling new theories of non-Jewish scholars. The "Higher Critics," breaking up the Pentateuch into separate documents, were asserting that the Patriarchs were fictional projections of later times. The Psalms were largely "Maccabean." Everything was "late." The "holiness" of the Bible was being called into question by parallels in other ancient literatures. Religious ceremonies were being "explained" through anthropology and folklore. How was all this to be handled?

The *JE* found a satisfactory solution. With every Old Testament book or character, the straight Bible story was told first, followed by a separate section giving a full account of all the legends on the subject, and then by a section summarizing, rather cautiously, the "critical view." The reader knew exactly where he was. The "straight" part—on Abraham, let us say—was obvious. The legend section was quite original in systematizing so many vaguely remembered stories. But to read the "critical" section was, for a traditionally-educated Jew, almost like eating a ham sandwich:

The biography of Abraham in Genesis is probably to be regarded as legendary. . . . The stories

of Lot, Hagar, and Keturah are ethnological myths. . . . Circumcision was not adopted by the Israelites in the way here represented; the story of the attempted sacrifice of Isaac is a product of the regal period. . . .

Even to read it was daring. To believe it, even tentatively, was almost blasphemy. But it opened the mind.

All is very different in the new encyclopedia. Seventy years have passed. Critical theories, familiar now to the most devout, are looked at in a much cooler, less horrified way. Where a Jewish scholar still feels impelled by unshaken faith or vestigial sentiment to hold on to some form of fundamentalism, he is likely in most cases (though not all) to aim at refuting the critics in their own terms, rather than by outright refusal to consider any possible alternatives to the traditional approach. For most serious scholars, however, some position in the middle is assumed, allowing them to accept any conclusion that textual criticism may point to, provided critical techniques are applied without preconceived theories and with full regard to the wealth of information that has become available from other fields. A major factor here is the breakthrough in archeology, as a result of which much that was once obscure in the Bible text can now be seen to be explicable by parallels with other ancient cultures of the Near East. Far from weakening the uniqueness of Israel's story, the main effect is to give the traditional text a heightened power. And with or without Orthodox theological faith, all Jews in Israel feel the Bible vividly present to them as history, so that they live with the story in daily life rather than in the synagogue.

This shift of ground in the new encyclopedia operates, surprisingly, with a double effect. On the one hand, the numerous articles there on Bible subjects are revolutionary enough to take the critical approach as a starting point; on the other hand, they seem to work their way through to a very strong affirmation of views which sit comfortably with traditionalism (though not with fundamentalism). Their attitude is workmanlike rather than theological. On Abraham, for example, the "legendary" aspect mentioned by the old *JE* has more or less gone. Abraham as a person may not yet have been identified, but:

The evidence of a sociological and onomastic nature that has been accumulated since the discoveries at Nuzi, Mari, and elsewhere tends to show that the Abrahamic traditions are more likely to be authentic reflexes of a true historic situation than retrojections from a later period.

The full-length article on the Pentateuch as a whole (by Moshe Weinfeld of the Hebrew University) takes this approach much further. Opening with a fully-documented acceptance of the idea that the Pentateuch has to be seen as an

amalgam of four "sources" (J, E, P, and D), he establishes to his own satisfaction that the editing (and much of the content) of the first four books reflects the David-Solomon Age, and Deuteronomy the time of Hezekiah-Josiah. He then goes on, however, to take the material further back into history. "The traditions that serve as the basis of the pentateuchal literature began to be crystallized . . . as early as the period of the Judges." Wellhausen's view that the Priestly elements (P) are very "late" (Second Temple) are baseless: "the sacral institutions . . . are known to us from early biblical literature." Indeed, the whole idea of separate "sources" can mislead: "in spite of differences and contradictions . . . a common underlying legal and historical tradition can be observed." Even more surprisingly, he ends up with Moses giving Israel the Law at Mount Sinai: "the basic premise underlying this tradition, i.e., that Moses was the first legislator and, as such, responsible for the basic legislature of Israel, is undoubtedly true." To get back to tradition this way is, of course, not enough for the really Orthodox. There is a postscript to the article by Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz emphasizing that the true traditionalist still believes that the entire Pentateuch is "a unitary document, divinely revealed, and entirely written by Moses" (except for the last eight verses recording his death). Yet even with this demurrer, one feels that Weinfeld's article, and others too, on the Bible, opens up a wealth of new study for us, and reflects a significant change in Jewish consciousness since the days of the old *Jewish Encyclopaedia*.

IN A similar spirit one can salute the great success of the new encyclopedia in marshaling the results of scholarship in our time on Jewish history as a whole, even if occasionally we may still feel a certain nostalgia for the pioneer style of its predecessor in this field. One has to remember that until the closing years of the last century there was virtually nothing, except for Josephus, that offered Jews any systematic account of their past after Bible times. It was therefore immensely gratifying, as Singer had hoped it would be, to read a "modern" account of where the Jews fitted into history in different ages, especially when the account was written in the comfortably relaxed style of older encyclopedias. One can still turn back with pleasure to read, for example, the splendid article in the *JE* on the great 2nd-century Rabbi Akiba. The author was Louis Ginzberg, whose command of the entire literature was to be shown later in his masterly volumes, *Legends of the Jews*. In the new encyclopedia, the article on Akiba is one-third the length, and we seem to have heard it all before. In fact it is fair to say that a large proportion of the articles on what are now familiar subjects seem dull and technical.

BUT if the new work falls short in this respect, it more than makes up for it by the originality which it introduces into so many other fields. Some of these can be mentioned only briefly here, despite their wide ramifications. If one starts with A for "Archaeology," it is not only for the biblical spin-off already mentioned, but because the massive treatment of the subject in all its forms (including a 50-page illustrated guide to pottery styles as a Supplement to Volume I) seems to lift the reader out of so many sad topics—inevitable, alas, in a Jewish encyclopedia—to a level of sheer pleasure and adventure. Perhaps in the same breath one should add A for "Art," since the reproduction throughout the encyclopedia of many marvelously illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages reflects a wealth of discovery and irradiates in color what were once thought of as the Dark Ages of Jewish life.

Another subject quite transformed in grasp today as a result of massive detailed study is the history of individual communities. This emerges in the new encyclopedia in connection with the intensive effort in the present century to establish a well-founded social history of the Jews and a valid theory of their economic role. All too often in the encyclopedia, as we shall see, the editors break up a subject into small pieces. Here, fortunately, they hand over a very large theme to the outstanding authority in the field, Salo Baron. Under the heading "Economic History of the Jews" (which appears as a Supplement to Volume 16), Professor Baron covers the story from ancient times to the 15th century in an article of some 24,000 words. He brings out the immense variety of Jewish experience and at the same time an underlying unity: not that Jews had a narrow kind of talent which forced them into the same fields, but rather that their distinctive character everywhere encouraged successive societies to cast them into special roles.

For much of the period described by Professor Baron there is no formal material to draw on, so that the picture has to be constructed indirectly, often to amusing effect, out of odd remarks in the Talmud or the rabbinic responsa. We hear of Jews as tanners only because the rabbis ruled that a tanner's wife could use the awful smell as grounds for divorce. The great success in date-growing in Babylonia is revealed when the Palestinian Rabbi Ulla, arriving there, exclaims: "A whole basket of dates for a *zuz*, and yet the Babylonians are lax in studying the Torah." The role of scholars as businessmen comes out when we hear of three famous rabbis of this time amassing great wealth from the brewing of beer. On a broader plane Professor Baron shows us the conditions which made the Jews into merchants. In the early Diaspora, when conversion to Judaism was common, Jewish communities turned into trading centers

through contact with Phoenicians and Carthaginians who brought with them the commercial skills for which they were famous. A more dramatic moment came with the rise of Islam. Professor Baron shows in detail how "the new political and socioeconomic revolution for the first time converted a predominantly agricultural Jewish population into a people of merchants, moneylenders, and artisans." It was through Islam also, we learn, that Jews were first put into their fateful role as tax-farmers. The Koran was interpreted to mean that non-believers could be tolerated if they accepted a special duty to provide "tribute." In different circumstances the Jews in Christian Europe became "the King's Treasure" to similar effect. Yet if the Jews were in this way conditioned by others, they retained a vivid sense of independence, with much more freedom (e.g., in owning land) than is often thought, and able to feel that the rules of commercial life had to fit in with their own law (as interpreted by scholars) and their own social rules. To a very great extent—it seems a surprising conclusion—they were free and inner-directed as a people even if as individuals they might feel driven by the pressures of the external world.

Some of the same ideas emerge in the study which follows (by Professor Arcadius Kahan of Chicago) of Jewish economic history from the 16th century to our day. Going beyond the familiar exposition of Jewish migrations and international contacts as a key to their role during the emergence of industrialism and capitalism, the author takes us into the socioeconomic structure of Jewish communities everywhere, giving full play to class motivations and tensions (though without the dogmatic Marxism of Raphael Mahler's recent *History of Modern Jewry*).

These are merely two articles of many which bring together the pioneer work of scholars on the variety and independence of community life as a new approach to understanding Jewish history. The summary article on "Autonomy" alone (by Dr. Isaac Levitats) is an eye-opener. To take a single illustration, one thinks of the Jews in Spain as closely integrated with the world around them (in economic and cultural terms) until the dramatic reversal of policy through which they were finally expelled in 1492. We learn here, however, that "in Christian Spain self-rule achieved heights rivalled only in the Muslim lands and by the Councils of the Lands of Poland-Lithuania." A separate article on "Judicial Autonomy" shows what wide powers Jewish authorities throughout medieval Europe had, even, in some circumstances, covering capital punishment (mainly for "informers"). One begins to understand the tremendous internal political and social struggles that would be generated in this special kind of existence, but one feels, also, how it explains the cohesion of the Jews and their powers of survival. There was

social strength in this background, which gives substance to Ahad Ha'am's remark that it was a period in which the Jews had "freedom within slavery," in contrast with Jewish life after emancipation—"slavery within freedom."

THIS is perhaps the implicit underlying theme of what is the most monumental single contribution to the entire work: an article of perhaps 120,000 words—a whole book, in fact—on the Kabbalah, linked to a huge article on Sabbatai Zevi and various other cognate pieces, all from the pen of the acknowledged master in the field of Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem. What is there about this esoteric subject that justifies its treatment at such length? In the hands of Scholem, it is the key to understanding the forces that led ultimately to the idea of restoration in the land of Israel. Finding his way with painstaking care through the earlier manifestations of Kabbalah, when it was the inner secret law of the universe, he shows how it became transformed, after the expulsion from Spain, into "man's journey toward redemption," with messianic overtones that "even after the break-up of the Sabbatian movement [remained] deeply rooted in the national consciousness." Among the masses in Eastern Europe, out of which Zionism was to grow, the one unshakable faith that transcended all bitter sectarian struggles was the idea of the Jewish people linked in almost metaphysical terms with the ancient Holy Land. If 20th-century Zionism seemed in outward form a demonstration of the Jewish people reaching out like their neighbors toward a secular nationalism, it derived its inner power from built-in spiritual traditions assumed almost without definition—a sense of veneration that was expressed for some in the Torah, or for others in the holiness of a people that had guarded the Torah.

If Scholem is unique, it is still true to say that in every article in which the contributor is given his head, we are confronted directly with the underlying central issues of Jewish existence, or at the very least hear overtones of these questions. If—*impossibile dictu*—one were reading *Encyclopaedia Judaica* from cover to cover (as the learned read through the Talmud, that very first Jewish encyclopedia), one would feel a sense of overlap and repetition. But since in fact one opens the work to look up odd details or to try this or that major subject, the overall impression is, rather, the *variety* of approaches, signaled at best when the individual contributor feels able to go beyond a factual summary to express his own feelings. An outstanding example is a single article, by Professor Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, on the whole of Diaspora history, from the 4th century to the present time. Once again it has the scale of a book—some 70,000 words—though it is only part

of the huge entry on "History" which spreads over 106 pages. In contrast with all the older general histories of the Jews (including, it must be said, the works of Cecil Roth), this powerful summary of Jewish experience rises beyond the familiar alternates of suffering and achievement to express the texture and feeling of Jewish life, giving weight also to the new approach already mentioned—the social and economic background in every country and period. It emerges as a story of individuals, confronted as all human beings are with the insoluble problems of attaching a meaning to man's existence, but coming to terms with life (when life was possible) through family and local affections, the drive to keep going, intellectual and social diversions, and above all the pleasures and frustrations of "the search": the struggles with conflicting loyalties, the responses to new movements and ways of thought, the feeling of being involved in something beyond oneself.

There is a sense of dignity about it which survives even when the story seems to reach the end of survival—the end of all meaning:

The Holocaust showed the inhumanity which anti-Semitism could bring, not only despite, but in the main *through* mass culture, mass education, and the use of mass media for propaganda and indoctrination. The executioners were dehumanized beyond recovery in the process. The victims were intended to reach this state but Jewish vitality and spirit, and the demonstration of Jewish brotherhood, quickly brought back most of the survivors to personal integration and proud human stature. The numbers that had been tattooed on their skins in the camps were not obliterated; most of those Jews learned to live with them, and gained a renewed belief in humanity.

"Personal integration." It is a phrase that one tries to cling to as one hears on almost every page of the encyclopedia some echo—implicit or resounding—of this unspeakable horror. It comes in a thousand contexts, starting with historical descriptions of the poison generated by 19th-century nationalism, and culminating in a massive account by Jacob Robinson of the Holocaust itself in all its unbearable detail. Threaded through the story are photographs, almost all taken, obviously, by the Nazis themselves. Any single one of them would be enough. The text, one might say, is redundant. But there is an unending problem for Jews themselves, not only in how to live with the memory, but how to think of the way in which those who were caught up with the tragedy bore themselves. We have lived through a period of twenty-five years in which the documents have built up. Nothing has diminished the general horror, but we are gradually accepting that among the millions who were trapped, the moral problems for those who

had to "cooperate" are probably forever beyond our judgment. Desperately, Robinson tries to "explain": to show the rationale, to instill some charity in us where we want, somehow, to turn away in grief. He cannot entirely succeed because it is a problem which is ultimately beyond any categories of assessment in "normal" civilized terms.

More poignant in some ways, because they are less complicated, are the brief documentations of the Holocaust in relation to every single town—every village—in Central and Eastern Europe in which Jews lived. The earlier history of each place is given first, and from these thousands of entries alone, appearing everywhere in the alphabet, one gets a vivid picture of the background out of which the great mass of modern Jewry sprang. There are cheerful and sad stories—famous men, ancient conflicts, market days, arts and crafts—a cradle of life. And then, to close each item, "the Holocaust." In one place after another—the round-up, the ghetto, the shooting in the woods nearby, and ultimately the transportation to death. In our minds we have a postscript—the rescue of survivors, a new life in many lands, and above all the creation of Israel. If any final evaluation is possible, it has to take all this in.

THE new encyclopedia does its best to help us toward such an evaluation. On Israel itself, nothing exists to match *Encyclopaedia Judaica's* descriptive range, both in text and illustration; and under "Zionism," we have an excellent guide to the multi-faceted movements out of which the national experiment took shape and maintains its being. For many readers, this detailed coverage of what is overwhelmingly the most central issue in Jewish life today will take them beyond the need for any further questioning of the *raison d'être* of Jewish experience. And indeed, when one turns in the encyclopedia for enlightenment on other key issues, nothing so clear-cut emerges.

Some readers, thinking to start with the most fundamental question, may open the work at the entry on "Judaism," encouraged by its subtitle: "The religion, philosophy, and way of life of the Jews," and by the name of its author, Rabbi Louis Jacobs. But for once this excellent writer is defeated. The faith of Jews through the ages has included too many disparate elements to yield to simple definition. He brings us closer in some ways to seeing Judaism in action in a separate article on "Theology." And if we are trying to find out what being a Jew has meant *historically*, we have also to consider the crucial point raised by Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg in a subtle essay on "Jewish Identity": that "outside pressure" has defined the Jew as firmly as his own internal feelings.

Many other articles pursue these themes, yet in the end *Encyclopaedia Judaica* tells us as much

by encouraging us to turn the pages at random as by learned definitions. For never was alphabetical serendipity richer. One goes on one page from the movie star Kirk Douglas (born Issur Danilovich) to the great Hasidic leader Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezhibezh. One learns next of Dra, a region in South Morocco which is said to have been an independent Jewish state in ancient days, and where Jews farmed land with the help of the descendants of black slaves until modern times. A little lower down, David Dubinsky is followed by the great historian Simon Dubnow, in this case a coming together of two men motivated by common feeling, despite the differences in their lives.

Sometimes there is a parade of history in a single family name, with the passions of the time coming to life in astonishing form. Mordecai Meisel, who lived in Prague in the 16th century, financed the wars of the Emperor Rudolph II, and was the first Jewish capitalist of Europe. He spent a fortune redeeming Jewish captives from pirates, but in the end, in a quarrel over his wealth, his entire family was excommunicated. From the 18th century we meet Moses Meisels, a rabbi who managed miraculously to keep friendly with both sides in the classic struggle between the Vilna Gaon and the Hasidic leader Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyady, but came to a sticky end after being accused during the Napoleonic invasion of secret contacts with the French. In the 19th century there is Dov Meisels of Cracow—rabbi, banker (through a rich father-in-law), and ardent Polish patriot, urging his congregants to fight against Austria in successive revolutions, and supplying arms to the rebels. The Jews as Polish patriots! One has to keep remembering how deep these national attachments have been. As if to symbolize the irony, we are led through the same name into the final moment of this story. Maurici Maisel was the last President of the Warsaw Jewish community. When the Nazis invaded in 1939, he fled. For those who remained, the saddest—and most heroic—page in Jewish history was about to be written.

The recreation of the lost Jewish world of Eastern Europe is a uniquely precious aspect of the encyclopedia. By contrast, the detailed treatment given to its successor—American Jewry—is inevitably prosaic, especially as it moves from the colorful immigration period to “success.” The achievement in America is extraordinary, but strangely, the more pictures one sees of distinguished Jewish worthies and resplendent modern synagogues (all apparently built by Percival Goodman), the less one seems to know about what it means and where it is leading. Is this unfair? Perhaps the encyclopedia itself, with its heavy U.S. backing, is evidence that beneath the surface there is an overpowering desire for the sustenance of a more affirmative approach to Jewish life. One felt more confident of this

before the reemergence of Jewish self-hate in the New Left (well-treated in an article of the encyclopedia). But even so, there is a new “freedom” in being Jewish which a non-American seems to detect. And this incidentally is the answer to a criticism which some might make of the inclusion in the encyclopedia of all kinds of people with Jewish backgrounds, whether or not they lived, or live, as Jews. It might once have seemed question-begging and undignified to build up long lists of Jewish achievement by roping in every possible name when so often these famous people (running the whole gamut from millionaires to Communists) were so obviously anxious to avoid the tag. To be “non-Jewish Jews” (in Isaac Deutscher’s phrase) was their aim. Today, however, there is a more flexible mood in the air. The Holocaust and Israel are two factors that have brought things out into the open. One can be Jewish strongly or vaguely, *en passant* or perhaps *en revenant*. It is even fashionable. And so in a vast work which tries to list everything, let them all be there.

YET another virtue can be found in these lists. They lead one to ask whether there is anything identifiably Jewish in fields where, on the face of it, the achievement of Jews seems spectacular. The very long article on medicine traces Jewish achievement in the field back to Talmud times and all through the Middle Ages. Is it brains (not very convincing), social position, or some lofty “Jewish” desire to help the suffering? Certainly medicine has been the field of a high proportion of Jewish Nobel laureates. But then, oddly enough, so has high-energy particle physics. Is one supposed to ascribe this to “Jewish originality” or a powerful Jewish urge “to search for the Ultimate”? It may be gratifying to be lofty in this way. But looking at one long list after another (Jews in architecture, art, chemistry, music, sport, the theater, and so on), one recalls that there have been quite a lot of Jews around in modern times, especially in the dynamic atmosphere of urban centers, and they had to do *something*.

Perhaps we should be grateful—or complain?—that while the editors thought it right, as it no doubt is, to include a list of Jews in criminology, they do not give us a list of Jews in crime. It is true that we are provided with individual entries for Bugsy Siegel and Lepke Buchalter (perhaps other gangsters too), but in general such discussion as there is of the incidence of crime among Jews is conducted anonymously. To be fair, the encyclopedia is not mealy-mouthed on this subject. Among some disturbing features (often related to the abnormal situation of the Jews), it acknowledges their heavy role some years ago in the white-slave traffic in Argentina (with links to Eastern Europe), showing also the strenuous and successful efforts of Jewish welfare organiza-

tions to remove this blot. And it also reports, in predictable fashion, that the variety of crimes in Israel has become as wide there as anywhere. In other words, the Jews are now normal.

Jews in chess provide a good list, though it may surprise some to learn that the Jewish contribution to chess on an appreciable scale dates only from the middle of the 19th century. However, there is one great field which, according to the encyclopedia, can be definitely and almost absolutely identified with the Jewish genius—the movies. Here are all the alleged Jewish characteristics working at full blast—enterprise, imagination, financial acumen, artistry, vulgarity. The list of Jews in the motion-picture industry rolls on for pages, offering pleasant surprises (to one reader at least) in being able now to welcome to the fold Leslie Howard, Erich von Stroheim, Peter Lorre, Walter Matthau, and Anouk Aimée. We may smile at Hollywood, but it is at least more satisfying as an episode in Jewish history than, say, the Jewish contribution to public relations, where the encyclopedia invites us to take in the memorable fact that it was a Jew, Edward Gottlieb, who coined the slogan: “Which twin has the Toni?”

We should not, perhaps, leave these endless lists without a mention of the most striking series of all, if we are looking for an unusual pointer to the changed status of the Jew. At the end of every article on a major country the encyclopedia gives us a roster of Jewish writers there, always with a capsule assessment of each individual, unless the writer is treated separately (under his own initial) elsewhere. For the United States the change is extraordinary. In the old *JE* there were only a few lines on this subject. Here the roll-call is staggering, preceded by an interesting analysis (by Hillel Halkin) of the way in which writing by Jews in America has come to have significance not only for the writers' own local and personal involvements but often, also, for the universal contemporary condition.

IN ITS range, then, in its power as a stimulant, and in its reflection of many of the subtleties of this moment in time, the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* is to be welcomed wholeheartedly. But one has, alas, to be more guarded in certain other respects. The Preface explains that the aim of completing all 16 volumes within five years and publishing them simultaneously could be realized only by “the principle of maximum subdivision so as to involve the greatest number of editors and contributors.” Maybe; but what of the defects of this method? Even as a straight reference book it suffers, since on many subjects (one can only go by sampling) the material has clearly been extracted from other sources by contributors who lacked real understanding and consequently not only made mistakes from time to time on

names and dates (which anyone can do) but got the weight or balance wrong, which is more heinous. The break-up of subjects in many hands makes things choppy. The editors count on the reader using the index, which is huge. But it was composed by a computer which just lists everything, with no sense of weight, and one suffers accordingly.

If one tries, for example, to inform oneself thoroughly on a central subject like marriage, one finds the basic article itself split up among four contributors covering respectively the concept, marriage ceremonies, various customs, and legal aspects. But this is just the beginning. As one reads, one is referred in the course of the text to many additional separate articles. In the index itself there are about 200 references. Perhaps this is what an encyclopedia is for, and in this particular case one has to pay tribute to a really marvelous range of illustration, but one misses, somehow, the long, relaxed, steady read.

To report on another sampling, one would have liked, somehow, to get a long, “classical” article on the entire subject of Christianity, but it does not appear. There is a rather short article (about 3,000 words), by David Flusser, on Jesus, very dry in style. A separate article follows (extracted from the *Encyclopaedia Hebraica*) on Jesus in the Talmud and Midrash; and elsewhere there is a round-up article on Christianity by Professor R. J. Zwi Werblowsky. Once again there are columns of related references to the subject in the index, but it is tiresome to follow them up.

Even more surprising, perhaps, is the material on the Marranos, where the story is treated very sketchily and without inner feeling. The acknowledged authority on this subject was, of course, Cecil Roth himself, and one might have expected a long personal study from his pen. Perhaps his untimely death prevented this. We are given instead (from an American professor) an entry of about 250 words discussing the possible meanings of the word, and a second article under “Marrano Diaspora” dealing in summary form with their wanderings and activities. Of course there are the cross-references. Yet surely here was a subject which could have benefited from a long ruminative treatment, bringing out the complexities of circumstance that precipitated this strange phenomenon, the emotional overtones, and the socioeconomic context in which the Marranos played out their role in succeeding centuries.

In the same spirit one looks, but in vain, for a relaxed discussion somewhere of what is always thought to be one of the most distinctive qualities of the Jews—their sense of humor. There is, it is true, a fascinating article on “Parody,” which shows how natural wit exploited to the full the Jewish preoccupation with their inherited material—the Talmud, the Haggadah, and so on.

But there is nothing (as far as one can see) which brings out the unusual talent which Jews have shown, especially in the United States, for humor in its broader sense.

There are other shortcomings and irritations which may be the price that was paid for speed. It is always a matter of judgment, of course, whether a subject demands a separate entry at the expense of repetition in a more general article, but often the judgment seems to go wrong. If one tries, for example, to get a coherent picture of a remarkable phenomenon of our times—the Lubavicher movement in Hasidism—one can pick up only a few indirect mentions. As for irritations, the use of asterisks throughout the text attached to every word on which, it is thought, the separate entry under this word will expand the meaning, results in an asterisk-studded nightmare. The editors should have followed the practice of other encyclopedias by inserting references to subjects where necessary, rather than relying on a computer to pick out words. The index, to be usable profitably, should have been a third, or a quarter, the length, and could have been if the subject grouping had been better.

YET all this is, in the end, marginal. In so many other respects the work fulfills the criteria of a great encyclopedia. Some

of the really magisterial articles have already been mentioned, and there are others. The article on Yiddish literature by Professor Chone Shmeruk of the Hebrew University is wonderfully thorough; the study of Hebrew prosody by Professor Benjamin Hrushovski of Tel Aviv University is entirely original, and is bound to become a classical source; the whole of the huge article on Hebrew language (which gets in by the skin of its teeth as a Supplement to Volume 16) is illuminating. And, though the subjects of the article may well be shocked, one welcomes the fact that a woman scholar, Dr. Rivka Schatz-Üffenheimer, contributed large sections to the splendidly evocative article on Hasidism.

Certainly the encyclopedia is a great tool of reference. It reflects to the full the immense variety of Jewish life; and in its concentration on Israel it documents the most momentous change in Jewish experience since the destruction of the Temple. Some readers might have preferred a more reflective type of encyclopedia in which fewer headings allowed outstanding writers to bring whole subjects together. But that is a matter of taste. At least one can say of the work as a whole what Rabbi Ben Bag-Bag said of the Torah: "Turn it and turn it again, for everything is in it."

Blue in Chicago

Bette Howland

FIRST thing this morning, getting ready to leave the house, I heard over the news broadcast that another University of Chicago graduate student had been shot and killed in a holdup in Hyde Park. I was holding my breath—but the name was not one I knew. I am a graduate student at the university and I live in Hyde Park. I listened closely for details—the time of night, a number, a street. You always want to know how close these things have come to you.

There were two students. They were at a party and had gone out to get more beer. On the way back three youths demanded their money. The one student gave up his wallet immediately and walked away; the other was a black belt in karate—he put up a fight. Five times the gun clicked and misfired; the sixth shot tore his side. The radio announcer went on to recall other such incidents in recent years, the last student murdered only a few months ago.

It was a densely dark morning. I live in a small studio on top of a high rise—mostly windows; a friend calls it a perch on a flagpole, because I never draw the shades. Lately one visitor after another has expressed a wish for an apartment just like mine: “It’s perfect,” they say. From which I infer that they all want to climb up the flagpole: remove themselves. There is certainly something remote about my situation. For instance, I can see the helicopters surveying the morning traffic snarls, hovering over the city. On days like today they seem to be putt-putting about in thick gray gloom like outboard motors. The noise takes up the whole sky. Maybe because the radio didn’t give more exact details—because the young man was unknown, faceless to me—because I couldn’t pinpoint the spot—all at once there were no lines of demarcation. There were no limits. It was out there—I realized for the first time in a long time that it didn’t matter *where*. What mattered was that it was happening. Therefore it was close to me.

One other thing. I was about to set off for my cousin’s wedding. And it seems that every time I

trek north for one of these family occasions, the subject is bound to come up: why I continue to live on the South Side of Chicago, with its high crime rate and race warfare. And almost inevitably something like this will have happened, been on the news, plastered over the headlines. But this morning I had a strange, obstinate reaction: I didn’t feel like being hassled in this way—didn’t feel *apologetic* about living in Hyde Park. Maybe it’s inertia; or mulishness—a family trait.

My Uncle Rudy’s height and hulking shoulders filled the space behind the wheel. A huge man, six-foot-four, two-hundred-and-fifty pounds; crew-cut, bullet-headed: the thick close-shaven folds lay on his neck. Even from the back, in his checked gray suit, you could tell—a cop. I looked at the back of his head, graying bristles, wondering what he was thinking. Impenetrable. The head seems too small for the great body; his nose is a beak. When his nose got broken somehow on maneuvers, the army doctors offered to make it over for him while they were at it. But Rudy wouldn’t hear of it: tampering with his destiny. An obstinate man; he’s somewhat deaf, he lost the hearing of one ear in the service. He could have an operation for nothing. But he never will: “Who needs another hole in the head? One ear’s enough.” He pulled into the grimy, sluggish traffic, deaf or indifferent to our female conversation.

I couldn’t believe that we were going to talk about Roxanne’s hair all the way to the wedding. Rudy’s wife—a few years younger than I am, actually: a big, fair, stable type in a sleeveless dress, with her pale head drooped over her knitting. Peculiarly pale, a rock-candy shade, almost translucent.

“Oh, you did something to your hair,” my mother remarked as we climbed in back.

“I don’t like it,” Roxanne said at once, without looking round or lifting her head, her bare shoulders scarcely moving in their sockets as she plucked at her needles. “I tolt her beige blond and she dit it silver blond instet.” She spoke in her discontented mountain drawl.

“Go back and make them do it over,” my mother said. “You pay enough for it.”

BETTE HOWLAND’s article, “Public Facilities,” appeared in our February issue. Mrs. Howland is currently at work on a book of memoirs.

"It looks pretty though," my grandmother said, squinting and peering.

Roxanne flicked the yarn irritably over her forefinger. "I don't like it."

And so on. But sometimes it seems that's all these occasions are really for. "Aren't you going to put on any makeup?" my mother said as soon as I walked in the door. "Look how thin she's getting," my grandmother complained, looking at me disapprovingly. "She's putting on weight," said my mother. Even my grandmother is all dolled up—a little old lady, shrunken, gazing out from between shoulders hunched with arthritis. Swollen crippled fingers clasping her coat, the lapels weighted down with dime-store brooches. She loves adornment. There was a pause just before as we were leaving her flat: she wanted to retrieve her watch—a big Timex with a Spandex band, a man's watch. The utilitarian chunk of nickle-plating dangled from her fingertips. The stiff fingers stretched the band, dragged it over her wrist. She's eighty-three and she's even more obstinate. Her children beg her to come and live with them, get out of that wretched neighborhood; now their own children are marrying, they all have room—they'd love to have her. But she knows better. At her age it's bad enough being mortal, without having to make apologies for it too.

"Hey! Which way you going?" My mother sat up suddenly in her dark mink stole, her erect striking white head looking all about. She was in black and white from head to foot, stark contrasts: a long evening skirt and pointed shoes. "I thought you were going to take Sheridan."

"Hah! We'd be there tomorrow, I took Sheridan," Rudy said, calmly looking over his shoulder and showing the dark spaces in his teeth. Though his is a hazardous occupation, the teeth were in fact knocked out in a tobogganing accident. He has a loud offended voice, the result of his partial deafness.

"You don't mean to tell me you're taking the *Edens Expressway*!"

"Naturally. What do you think? I'm taking Edens."

"Edens! Who ever heard of anything so stupid! *Taking Edens!*" My mother, erupting, was rummaging rapidly in her purse. She took out a mimeographed slip of paper—a map of directions to the church, in one of the northernmost suburbs; it had come with all the invitations—and she thrust it over the seat at her brother's big back. "Here! Look! You go straight out Sheridan, you'll be there in fifteen minutes."

"You should have driven your own car, you wanted to take Sheridan," Rudy said, unmoved. His eyes weren't level, watching traffic in the mirror.

"I wouldn't say nothing more if I was you," said Roxanne, turning sideways in her seat to view my mother. "We're liable to ent up in Milwaukee. You know how stubborn Rudy is."

Yes, and he's had riot training. But my mother does not know how to desist. After a while she sat back, however, and began whispering to me in a continuous undertone, thrusting the map under my nose. I had already been traveling an hour and a half to get to my grandmother's, and I couldn't make heads or tails of it. That displeased her. She got angrier with me, flapping the piece of paper in my face—her own face startlingly sallow under her beautiful white hair. She must have seen I had no sympathy with her either. I couldn't help it; my mother's panic is an old and potent enemy of mine.

It was now noon, the wedding was called for twelve-thirty. "And when they say *twelve-thirty*, they mean *twelve-thirty*," my mother said, laying her hand to her cheek, her fingers studded with rings. "That's not *Jewish* time you know."

As a Chicago patrolman, Rudy has to live in the city. But one of the reasons my grandmother won't move in with her other children is that she finds the suburbs so dull; she likes to be able to see lots of people, to sit in a lobby somewhere and watch the world go by. All she asks is a lobby. In her neighborhood, with all the grim apartment hotels for the elderly, shelter homes and half-way houses, there are plenty of lobbies. But the one in her building is too dark, off to one side, you miss everything; and so she prefers to sit in the large window of the A&P, resting her shopping bags. Her next-door neighbor, confined to a one-room flat, always keeps the door open—sitting buoyed up among her pillows, like a pile of life-preservers, watching. She has a darkened, pewtery complexion; you feel her eyes on you. She's hearty enough, though—banging the rubber foot of her cane on the wall to get your attention.

Today when I had alighted from the elevator, both doors were open—my grandmother was going back and forth between the two rooms, keeping the neighbor company. She kept introducing us. "This is my granddaughter! My son! My daughter!" Today she was particularly proud of her visitors, because we were dressed up for the wedding. In fact my mother was still getting dressed, presenting her back—all unzipped—to the wide-open doorway, her long skirts hiked up about her hips, fastening her garters.

"So what do you call this, Mother?" I said.

"Hmm," she replied airily, bending over her black stockings, "nobody ever comes by here anyway."

And yet she is the first to complain about the suspicious types lurking in the elevators and passageways. They need encouragement. This is what you call flinging down the gauntlet. You see it all the time. I ring a friend's bell and she emerges into the dingy apartment hallway in her underpants to answer. My mother was also taking the opportunity to announce that her charms are

all used up (not so, by the way). Compared to other buildings in Uptown, my grandmother's is not that bad—a very large, dated structure: the entrance, long and naked as a ballroom, the dim, narrow pier-glass mirrors, harking back to days of luxury. And as we passed through this long corridor, my grandmother was reminded: the other day one of the tenants—a tall old man, broad-shouldered, I knew which one—got robbed on the bus. He had just cashed a pension check, eighty dollars. He sat in his shirtsleeves in the lobby, telling the others all about it. There wasn't that much to tell: he had the money in his pockets when he got on the bus, it wasn't there when he got off. His fingers felt about his chest, still groping in his pockets for the money—as if it might turn up yet. All at once he stiffened in his chair, his heart gave a leap beneath his shirtfront. He stretched himself out dead.

"So it turned out that *yener*"—the other, she meant the pickpocket—"needed that money worse than he did." Thus my grandmother, a graphic old lady with a babushka poked under her chin.

BY THE time we got to the church, the ceremony had already started. The church itself seemed rattlingly empty: row upon row of varnished pews, and only the white sheet down the middle aisle to indicate any of the usual trappings of a wedding. I'd heard it would be small and simple, but there was something intimidating about such austerity. I crept into the last pew on the aisle in back, my mother and grandmother slowly following arm in arm. The old lady—well under five feet—shuffling along with her head forward, watchful and determined. A few other latecomers hurried in, crossed themselves with holy water, and—stooping quickly on the aisle—slid into the bench on the other side of me. It was the first I'd realized that Millicent was Catholic, though I knew that her parents had objected to her marrying my cousin Gregg. (As they had objected last year when Gregory and Millicent traveled through Europe together. "If it was *my* daughter, I wouldn't let her go," my Uncle Leon had reassured them.) I don't know what Gregory considers himself. Long-legged in his striped pants and frock coat, he stood with his hands clasped in front of him, swaying very slightly. I could just glimpse the edge of his swarthy handlebar moustache. Millicent looked very tall in her white veil, with her long black hair curling down her back beneath the train.

Rudy strolled in with his hands in his pockets—looking back and scowling at us over his shoulder. Wondering what we were doing, of course, sitting all the way in back and on the wrong side—the bride's side. It was bright as daylight in the lofty empty church; he looked monolithic, wading through the pews. Roxanne followed, tiptoeing softly, tugging at the belt of her short black vinyl coat to cinch in her waist.

The priest asked us to rise. At once my eye was attracted to Uncle Leon's handsome head—the same arresting white mane as my mother's. From the back he seemed as broad-shouldered and narrow-waisted in his frock coat as Gregory, and he was standing in the same way—his hands clasped in front of him, swaying. A romantic figure—dark Latin features, bushy black brows; women are always telling him how handsome he is. "Ah I wish they wouldn't," my Aunt Irene will say, "there's no living with him after." A robust, pleasing matron, brown-haired, red-cheeked, beaming with hospitality, with a bosom like a tea service: a Quaker from the Lebanon Valley. She met Leon at Valley Forge; he a wounded corporal, she a hospital administrator. For him she joined the Wacs. In those days she could shake down her stoical braids and sit on her hair, all ripples and waves. Everyone knows that Leon raised the general level of intelligence, energy, capability, industry in our family several notches when he brought Irene into it. Yet after twenty-five years she is still the outsider. She's not Jewish. And everyone is sure that Irene for her part is still anti-Semitic. She probably is too—if their own prejudices are any indication. Some crevices run deep. It used to be that at election time the two of them would make a pact: they promised each other that neither of them would vote, since their votes could only cancel out. Irene is a Republican, straight down the line; Leon is a party Democrat, one X in the box and that's it. But each would sneak off and vote just the same, so now they ignore politics.

Again the priest asked us to rise. By this time my mother had begun to whisper, bending in her dark mink stole over my grandmother. The old lady looked owlishly ahead, she couldn't negotiate these ups and downs. "Do you think she's *Catholic*?" my mother was saying. "Nobody told us she was *Catholic*!"

The bride and groom turned around to accept the offertory. The bride's dark-browed face, broad in its headdress, suddenly, unexpectedly, shone upon us. It was burning, fiercely beautiful. "The Lord Bless you and keep you and make His face to shine upon you. . . ." For the first time all day I remembered what it was all about, felt privileged to be a witness. And everyone must have felt it. People came to their senses. There was almost a sigh of relief. The choir boy in his full black skirts crouched, quivering the brass bells. Millicent lifted her face to take Communion. Gregory did not take it.

"He isn't *Catholic*?" The ladies on the other side of me were whispering among themselves. "What is he then if he isn't *Catholic*? *Jewish*? You really think he's a *Jew*?"

I had waited almost fifteen minutes for a bus and when it finally came it wasn't an express. The expresses weren't running. The express

goes from Hyde Park directly onto the Outer Drive, and it takes ten or twelve minutes to get downtown. The local takes forty or fifty minutes. And it meanders through the South Side slums. At this point I could have walked a block to the Illinois Central commuter train, and taken a bus from downtown to continue north to my grandmother's; but it was obviously a day when my inertia was great. I got on the bus and sat down by a window in back and opened a book on my lap.

I always take books with me on buses or trains; I never read them. Years ago when I was an undergraduate at the university, I used to travel three hours a day on these same buses, commuting between the South Side campus and my home on the West Side. "You can get all your studying done," that's what people would tell me. But I never got any studying done; I'd sit with the towering pile of books on my lap (I remember the thick green volumes of *The People Shall Judge*), looking out the window. Three hours a day, an hour and a half each way, looking at the same sights out the same windows. I was fifteen then and it's possible that all this traveling was stupefying me. But it still seems to me that there is something immoral—because inattentive—about reading when your body is in transit. And maybe I felt even then that I should be paying attention instead. But paying attention to what?

The thing I'd forgotten was how the bus kept turning. Up 51st to Drexel; down Drexel to 47th; up 47th to Martin Luther King Drive; down King to 43rd. . . . Every few blocks it nosed onward, plunging deeper and deeper into the black ghetto. The coins clicked and rolled in the fare box.

The South Side has always been Chicago's black belt; these slums were here years before I was born. But in the past when I traveled back and forth this way almost every day, I never noticed that I was white and the other passengers were black; I never paid any attention. Of course blacks themselves had not pressed the issue; and it must be said right off that the fact that I paid no attention to race and that it really did not matter to me one way or the other did not alter or affect the situation of blacks in any way. I remember becoming fully aware of this discrepancy reading *Native Son*, when the rich Communist girl and her boyfriend think that their lack of prejudice (a *sentiment!*) will make up to Bigger for everything! The trouble is that these one-to-one solutions—I-love-you, you-love-me; you-shoot-me, I-shoot-you—are just no use. They don't work. Still, this ignorance or purity was long gone and I would have given a great deal to have it back again. Today I was very much aware of the color of everyone else's skin, and I was sure that everyone else on the bus was equally aware of mine. But this was manifestly

not so—no one was paying attention to me, any more than I was paying attention to the pages of the book open on my lap. As a matter of fact, almost everyone else seemed to be reading—the newspapers crackling, the murder black in the headlines.

The bus was getting crowded; passengers swayed in the aisle and grappled for the strap-hangers. A young girl groped her way, arm over arm, along the rails, an unlighted cigarette between her fingers. Hot-pants, vinyl stretch-boots, a turban. Her face broad, flat, artificially pale; expressionless. She leaned her shaved eyebrows over my seat: "Got a match?" I gave her matches.

This has got to stop. I've got to stop reacting to people according to *color*. This is what's been happening to me; it's happening to every white I know. You can't help reacting in this way—just try it. Try it walking down the street some night. It's a reflex. Everyone is becoming conditioned. And for some reason I realized this all of a sudden listening to the news this morning, realized that I've been allowing myself to become conditioned, letting this fear, this racism, run away with me. I'm not sure why a murder in the streets—even around the corner—should have had this bracing effect on me. *But I used to know these things*. Maybe that's why I got on the bus today; you've got to come up for air *some* time.

THE sign on the parking lot gate said "Left Turn Only," so Rudy turned right. The rest of the cars had already gone off, leaving the church in a motorcade to the motel where the wedding reception would be held; it was too late to follow. Roxy was studying the little mimeographed map.

"It's right around the corner."

As a matter of fact we were at Fort Sheridan, the army base; I used to think it was much farther when I was a little girl and Rudy was stationed here. Now the low-lying motels all around were not that easy to distinguish from the barracks, the tracks of wire fences.

"Hey. How come you guys sat on the wrong side of the church?" Rudy asked. "How come you didn't come up front with the rest of the family? What's the matter with you—don't you like to see what's going on?"

"All that standing and *kneeling*," my mother said. "Nuts to that! I'm exhausted. I didn't know it was going to be a *Catholic* ceremony."

"I could've told you right away if I lookt at the invitation," Roxy said. "Only I never even lookt at the invitation." She spoke with some authority: she's Southern Baptist, I think.

I was wondering about this business of bride's side, groom's side. Maybe it represented real divisions. But how intransigent—how primitive—were these divisions? Roxy jerked a thumb to-

ward the window. "You turn right at this corner. Right at the stop sign."

Rudy went straight.

"Hey! Stupid! You should've turned back there," Roxy said, looking round and still jerking her thumb. "He'll get lost for sure if I didn't tell him."

"I think he must be doing it on purpose," I said.

"Congratulations," my mother told me, the corner of her mouth grim against her cheek. In a moment we came to a dead end, and Rudy had to back the car out through the trees.

By the time we got to the motel the reception line had already broken formation; the bride and groom were off having their pictures taken, and guests were milling about the pleasant blue room with its huge fireplace and stately chandeliers. Blue gas flames flicked and curled about the artificial logs; champagne glasses were being filled as quickly as they were snatched from the trays. When I have the chance, I always drink champagne.

I wasn't at the shower, so I hadn't met any of Millicent's family before. There seemed to be a preponderance of fair freckled aunts. Her father was a slight dark man with a stiff highball getting jostled in his grip; dour-faced. Well he might be, a plumber with four daughters to marry off, having to foot the bill for all these bashes. His wife impressed me: remarkably slender, elegant, blonde, in a bright long dress, full of delicate vitality. And the four strapping girls of course are all bouncingly beautiful. So it looks as though Gregg, like his father, has done awfully well for himself. This was the gist of the intelligence report I had already received from my mother.

"You know me, one drink and I'm out," my mother said, tripping up in her long skirts and holding her champagne glass aloft to show it was empty. It's true; usually she gets dazzling and giddy. But today she didn't look at all light-headed to me; everywhere I looked I kept seeing her vivid head, and her dress—black & white—as grimly prominent in the crowd as the two priests' habits.

"Someone asked me who I was and I forgot my name," my Aunt Sylvia said. My mother's younger sister: a helmet of smooth iron hair, long earrings. She was talking about her diet. She really did look much thinner, svelter and narrower in the bust and shoulders. But her face was thinner too, it looked pinched, sour (the intelligence report from my grandmother), and she was smoking—she never used to—holding the cigarette out awkwardly at arm's length, away from her skirts, the gold tips of her shoes, very judiciously tapping the ashes.

"Guess what? Gary called up from school and told us to break out the champagne." Gary is her son.

"He's engaged?" my mother asked.

"No—he got a job."

The job was at Zenith Radio, where Sylvia herself used to work during the war years when my Uncle Fred was in service. I remember very well—she lived with us at the time—her going off to work in her baggy-seated overalls, her hair bound in a turban with the black curls springing out at the top. She was on the assembly line. Gary will be financial adviser, fourteen thousand to start. A lot more than Fred makes as a printer.

My grandmother sat down at one of the empty, white-clothed tables, surveying the sea of preparations, the busboys filling the sparkling water glasses; she was waiting to be called by the photographer. She always says she hates to have her picture taken, but I noticed she had slipped off her glasses and dropped them into her purse. Without the old-fashioned harlequin frames (which make her appear somewhat owl-like), she looks—bushy brows, coarse powerful white hair, wide cheeks—like a shaman. Her dress was of some green iridescent material, the shimmering jacket bunched under her heavy brooches. As a younger woman my grandmother never used to have this personal vanity, she never cared for such things. But now her copyright has expired, so to speak; she has entered the public domain. She clutched her purse on her lap, smoothing back her strong hair with stiff, misshapen fingers.

Millicent's grandmother, a very large woman listing heavily on a cane, came up to be introduced: two old matriarchs. She's in her eighties too, seems vigorous—in her corsets, with the silver rinse on her hair. Her complexion darkened with age-spots, tarnished almost: like the neighbor with her pillow cushions. She had been opposed all along to the marriage because Gregg—or at least his father—is Jewish. The last hold-out in the family; the wedding had been delayed to appease her.

"You must come and take tea with me some time," she said, grasping my grandmother's hand. "Or coffee," she added, shaking emphatically.

"**W**HEN are you going to get married?" my Uncle Rudy asked, suddenly towering over me.

"I've already been, I don't have to do it again."

"So you wouldn't get married a second time?"

"Would you?" I said, sipping from the rim of the thin-stemmed glass.

"I didn't want to get married a first time," he said, in his dull monotone and peering about in his hawkish way—a head above the crowd. That's one thing about my Uncle Rudy: you can never tell when he's putting it on, pretending to be thick, deaf, slow, stubborn; you can't distinguish between these gross exaggerations and the crystalline, disarming truths.

Now he seemed shrugging but persistent: "How come nobody tells them?" We were both

looking toward my little cousin Mindy, almost gravely pretty, with her long thin exposed legs and parted curtains of hair. Hers will be the next wedding. *"Go ahead. Say something. Tell her."*

"I know, but you can't—it's not fair," I said.

My Uncle Fred—surrounded by Millicent's mother and aunts—scarcely glanced my way as I came up, and went on talking. His low, sibilant whisper. The hostess's blonde hair dipped forward attentively. It was Gary's job again—evidently this subject was of the most intense interest! I didn't understand the significance of this at first. The wedding itself was a sort of truce: it was the subject of Gary's job that seemed to be really uniting everybody.

Sylvia works as a clerk to help send Gary and Mindy through school; my Aunt Irene has been a waitress for years. And these blonde aunts of Millicent's, with their sparse fair brows, must have done as much. Now the job market had collapsed; a college degree was almost a liability. Millicent is still substitute teaching. Gregg was teaching driving, but has turned up something better—still temporary—with OEO. Mindy has been looking almost a year for a teaching position, and her fiancé will be graduating this summer with another useless certificate. But they've promised him he can stay on at the shoestore. Wherever you turned, the story was the same. And now that the situation is so bad, it isn't the kids who are worrying either—they are going to school, marrying, and traveling in Europe all the same. It's the parents—the plumbers, the printers—the same class who have borne the brunt of things all along, who are still worrying about the future.

I noticed the contact lens over Fred's wandering eye. An old shrapnel wound, quiescent for twenty-five years, all of a sudden it's started acting up. It gives his expression a piercing intensity. All my uncles are damaged with war wounds. There's Rudy's deafness: his loud, injured voice. Leon—strutting among the snowy white tables in his broad pleated shirtfront—is slightly lame in one arm; striking a match with his thumb, he lets it hang by his side. Leon is a notorious scofflaw—he will go out of his way to park illegally. This seems odd to me, such a profligate image.

What was secretly depressing everyone was this: after seven years of a sacrificially expensive university education, Gary will be earning about the same money as Rudy—a City of Chicago patrolman, who had to be trundled through high school in a wheelbarrow. Rudy makes a better living than any man in the family (Leon is a shop foreman; my father also worked in a factory until his retirement), but Rudy is the one who is supposed to be so stupid. It rankles. And—to make matters worse, and as if to rub it in—he has nothing to show for it. A dilapidated

apartment, a car that isn't paid for; the little boy is cross-eyed and needs an operation, there isn't a penny in the bank. (It seems that everybody knows their business!) And he and his wife don't get along either, there is rancor to go with the squalor. No one can understand such a life. They feel sorry for, irritated with, Rudy. Rudy and Roxanne seldom show up at these family occasions.

"So who's taking care of the children?" Sylvia asked, looking up at Roxy.

Roxy is almost a six-footer in her high-heeled slings, with her great wad of pale hair. Bare-armed, statuesque, but drained of vitality: she goes to the doctor twice a week to take liver shots. Of course my mother had already asked her that question; everybody kept asking her. "They're old enough to take care of themselves," she said tartly.

I still have custody, but since my two sons are older they have gone to live with their father, and now I'm the one who gets to see them only on school vacations. They had just gone back a few days before. It's not such a piecemeal arrangement, I'm not complaining. In some ways it's too good, too rich—we are just skimming the cream. Only I truly believe that life, a real life, is lived day to day. There is this to be said for it, however: at least no one asks me who's taking care of the children! Indeed, no one ever asks me much. Today I'm not even getting grilled about the usual topics, the crime and the "colored." Maybe because I won't talk about it. I was glad to see the dishes being wheeled in, in gleaming tiers on the service carts.

The best man—even swarthier than Gregg, with long black hair parted in the middle and pendulous moustache—was offering his arm to my grandmother. Still time for one last picture; she was much in demand.

"Oh how little she's getting," Sylvia remarked, biting her lip as she looked after the old lady—who was leaning deliberately on his dark sleeve, and shuffling along with outthrust head. She's adamant; she won't use a cane. "She used to be as tall as I am."

The thing is, I don't feel sorry for my grandmother. I don't think it's such a shame that she's so old. I love her with admiration, not out of pity. She is probably the only member of our family who doesn't wrench it out of me that way.

My father was in Israel, visiting my sister and the other set of grandchildren. At table, over fresh fruit cup of sherbert, everyone started to complain about the postcards they had received from him. They were all identical. "That's nothing," my mother said. It seems the two letters she received were also exactly the same. "He just doesn't know how to write a letter, poor man."

This is true, if I may judge from the five or six letters I have received from him in my life. Stilted, formal, almost to the point of illiteracy

—all the more so because he writes a scribe's hand, slanting and fluid. Palmer method: I believe he won prizes for his handwriting in grammar school. It's as if someone else had written them down for him, at his embarrassed dictation: "Be a Good Girl. Apply Yourself. Obey Your Mother. Don't Disappoint. . . . Your Dad."

My mother was working in a summer camp then; my sister and I used to spend our whole summer away from home, and I would miss my father bitterly. Crouching homesick in my lower bunk—with its coarse army surplus blanket and the damp smell of rough wood—reading these spartan lines over and over—his moralizing tone bewildered and bereaved me. *What had I done wrong? What was I going to do? How did he know about it?* But that seemed to be his prerogative; my father is a sort of natural moralist. Almost as big as my Uncle Rudy and far more powerful: he can fix anything, though his hands look thick and clumsy, capable only of brute strength. Once he lifted the back of a truck when a fellow worker was trapped under it. What I like about this story is its sequel, unimpeachably authentic and typical of my father's fortunes, his outlook, his whole life! the man he had saved would never talk to him again, shunned him sullenly, couldn't look him in the eye!

Last summer my father fell off a ladder while fixing the roof of a house (he's one of these obsolete men who *maintains* things). His size and strength added to the terror I felt in the hospital, observing his helplessness—a huge broken creature, gray-fleshed—the slick wet-mop grayness of internal bleeding—being lifted and turned by little nurses' aides. How they accomplished this was a mystery, for they would draw the canvas curtains about his bed before they assayed such a task. When I heard the noises behind the drawn curtains—when I watched the blips on the heart monitor while he lay laboriously breathing—his heart was leaking—I felt something like the pangs I used to feel when I read his letters in summer camp. There was a persistency of tone. Reproach. I was wondering, if he left like this, how I would live with it?

His trip to the Holy Land was a Pilgrimage after this Reprieve (his words, naturally). Passing silver sauce boats, baskets of crusty rolls, spearing icy butter pats (I always have difficulty), I started thinking of what it would be like to get a letter from my father. What if I tore open the blue airmail envelope and confronted once again the same old phrases in the same sloping hand: "Be a Good Girl. Tend to Business. Try to Make the Best of It. Don't Disappoint. . . . Your Dad."

The meal was excellent, salad with bib lettuce, the dressing really first-rate; prime rib, good and rare, with sauce Béarnaise. Our hostess had a flair for these things. The waitresses hovered attentively, and the photographer stalked about,

screwing the lens to his eye. He was one of Millicent's uncles, a sparse fair type like the rest; he'd fling up one arm and stiffen suddenly, as if he were dangling from it, lifeless.

"Take off your glasses," my mother cautioned, knocking my arm with her elbow as he flashed our picture.

She was dissatisfied with me, and that's how it comes out. How well I know—and yet I found myself reacting to her in the same absurd way—noticing all through the meal that she seemed to talk only when her mouth was full and her cheek was bulging like a fist. Alarming! Her sallowness. She was having a bad day, a dry-eyed day; she seemed cynical to me, bitter, discolored. I still wish I had been kinder.

The groom rose—slouching in his tux, like his father, with his dark symmetrical moustache. "I guess there's everyone in this room who means anything to me," he began, lifting his glass. Everyone was touched; it was as if we had had to be reminded once again; applause, murmurs, rose gratefully from the white circles of the tables, the clatter of dishes being carted away.

My grandmother of course doesn't eat meat out, it's not kosher. And we had forgotten to order her fish. The waitress looked at her plate: "You finished?"—eying the damp red slice of meat. My grandmother turned stiffly sideways to peer at the sound—since she can't move her neck.

"Take it away." She hadn't touched her food. She hadn't complained, hadn't carried on, though it was all in the script.

She turned back and looked at the wedding cake—they were rapidly distributing slices over the scraps and crumbs of the tables. "Wrap up a slice for me," she ordered my mother, pointing her big distorted finger. "I want to bring home for the *goy*." (She meant her neighbor.)

MY FORMER husband descended in a direct line from a Pilgrim who fell overboard during the voyage of the *Mayflower*. "A lustie younge man," Governor Bradford describes him, who held long and fast to the halyards, "sundrie fadomes under water," until they hauled him in out of the lurching sea. Since then the family had considerably loosened its grip. Papa was a civil engineer, a professor at Purdue, and they lived in a fine Victorian relic. There were raccoons in the attic—the shell-like claws left perfect tracks in the powder the exterminator had sprinkled; and in the bathroom—an afterthought, a cul-de-sac squeezed under the stairs, all eaves and crannies—you got the most delicious sense of privacy, as though people might forget that it and you were there. A grim reminder, however, was the mark painted about two inches up from the curved bottom of the bathtub—indicating the permissible water level.

The same thing they did in the bathtubs of Buckingham Palace during the war. So they say. The fact is, my in-laws were *tight*. Not the scrapping, face-saving, working-class sort of thrift I was used to: they were flagrantly, *shamelessly* stingy—the virtue of the faded Wasp aristocracy. Papa cooked up a stew of beef and carrots at the beginning of the week, and added oatmeal and water at the end. And he would follow you about, animated, talking, systematically switching off all the electric lights behind you. A hazard, since the house was crammed to the rafters; Papa had to climb up on a step-ladder to fetch down his books; there was furniture on top of the furniture—my mother-in-law collected antiques. He kept his magazines and newspapers, his yellowed files, in her cradle-rockers and canopied cribs and Filipino hammocks and even the upright commode-stools. But they were “only camping,” she told me—in this house whose every niche and shingle they had penetrated, occupied, swelling and expanding like the rock-wool insulation they had had pumped in, blown through a giant snorkel. Even at that time they had lived in Indiana over thirty years. But what’s thirty years to a New England blue-blood? They were ready to move back “at the drop of a hat.”

Now there were only two sons left, and one a confirmed bachelor. This branch had lost most of their money about 1905—before any of my progenitors had so much as stepped off the boat. What the family needed was some fresh blood, “hybrid vigor.” Thus Papa, thrilled at the prospect of having a Jewish daughter-in-law, breeding with the race—for he believed that all Jews were cultured, cosmopolitan, intellectual, and rich. I had never run into this wacky Puritan Jew-worship before, for obvious reasons: I didn’t fit the description, and I didn’t know anybody who did. What the dear old man thought when he took a half-day off from his duties at the university (only time he *would* take; he had seven years’ leave accumulated and untouched at his retirement, which had been forestalled through a special act of the state legislature), what he thought when he took his half-day off in honor of the wedding and came up for the afternoon on the *James Whitcomb Riley*, what he thought when he finally met me and my family, I don’t rightly know. And it doesn’t matter either, because he was right about the “hybrids.”

“Now listen you two,” I said, as the automobiles were pulling up to the carpeted canopy, “I’d like to get home some time today, so please don’t go nagging Rudy any more, leave him alone. He’s the driver—let him do what he wants.”

“Okay okay,” said my mother.

“She promised, I didn’t,” said Roxanne, reaching deep into her bag for her knitting.

It had turned out to be a nice day after all;

the sun had finally come out in the late afternoon, the sky was dark opaque blue, full of luminous banks of clouds. Rudy drove with exaggerated slowness, like the Sunday driver he was pretending to be—taking Sheridan Road, the scenic route home, to please my mother. The road wound and dipped through wooded ravines, still rusty brown with oak leaves. These are the affluent North Shore suburbs.

A little red convertible, a Fiat Spider with the top down, cut in front of us. The driver had very short, shaggy windblown yellow hair and the roots were dark—like the center of a daisy.

“There!” Roxanne said, growing somewhat animated and pointing the bright tip of her knitting needle. “There! That’s the color my hair was supposed to be!”

The little car sped off in a burst of exhaust and lost us quickly on the winding road. Roxanne leaned back, curving her spine and clicking her needles.

“Well I’m just glad Pa wasn’t here to see *that*,” my mother said at last. “It would make him feel *terrible*.” She shrugged her mink stole round her shoulders. “It just doesn’t work out. It’s much better when two people have the same background. It makes for a better chance in a marriage.”

“Is that how come you get along so good with your husband?” Rudy said, rearing back his head so he could eye her in the mirror.

“I wasn’t speaking personally,” she said.

My mother always says what she is thinking; but what could she be thinking of? Rudy and Roxanne in the front seat, bigger than life, her own daughter sitting right beside her. And if you observe that my marriage was a failure, and that Rudy and Roxanne are no great success, it does not make her remark seem more tactful. But it was a little late in the day for tact—every man could swim for himself. What bothered me was where she was at, what sort of world she must be living in. The fact is, with the exception of my sister, no one in my mother’s family has married a Jew in the last thirty years—which means that by now half her own relatives are no longer Jewish. And yet she still sees her family as average, normal, the salt of the earth. Which, in her terms, means Jewish.

Of course I know where she was at. She was reliving the scene of her own greatest humiliation—the day of my wedding. Only now, each time this scene is repeated, she finds herself older, less resilient, stonier—more isolated. A ship in dry-dock. She adjusted her furs, offended, while we stopped for a train-crossing. Bells shrilling, lights flashing and winking back and forth. The heavy boxcars knocked and shuddered over the tracks, the hood of the car glimmered. We were staring straight into the disc of the setting sun.

It dawned on me: we were supposed to be heading south and east, and there are no train-crossings on Sheridan Road. We were elsewhere. "Oh for God's sake Uncle Rudy!" I said, shouting over the noise. "What is this? Don't you know I have to get back to the South Side yet!"

"You're the one that said it, I didn't," Roxanne said, turning round and grinning full into the back seat.

AFTER the last student murder a few months ago, there were certain stirrings in the Hyde Park community. First Aid courses, an emergency switchboard service. It had taken almost an hour to get the young man to the hospital, with his fourteen stab wounds, and he bled to death. The purpose of first aid, switchboards, is to keep people from bleeding to death in the streets. And I suppose it makes all the rest of us bystanders, supernumeraries, feel more effective. But these are after all only *ex-post-facto*, one-to-one solutions. It all reminds me, weirdly, of the fallout-shelter craze of the early 60's, when people were sinking concrete blocks into holes in their back yards, stocking up with canned goods, flashlight batteries, shovels, and rifles. The point is, these people were preparing for nuclear attack; they were accepting it as an eventuality—they were *acquiescing*. One questioned the quality of such survivors. This was called civil defense. And telephones and tourniquets are obviously civil-defense measures too; the similarity is not accidental. The latest thing is a campaign to distribute silver whistles: you're supposed to keep them handy, wear them around your neck, blow them—after an assault.

None of this is going to stop the conditioning. Now that nights are warmer—windows open to the darkness, artillery noises from the street—you sense it all the more. The fear is quicker. Besides, everyone knows that violence increases with fair weather. Numbers only assert, but at least a dozen young women I know have been raped, beaten, and terrorized. The nature of the crime is significant; we are a passive population under siege. This anarchy, the flashing of guns and knives, may as well be martial law; there may as well be curfew in the deserted streets. You feel stranded after dark. The air is penetrating, particularly foul in Hyde Park, with the ghosts of the old stock yards to the west, and—very much alive, a red glow from my windows—the gritty spewings of the steel mills. It reminds me of the days after Martin Luther King's assassination: the odor of smoke and cinders blowing over the city; the slums were burning. The conditions I describe are only a reflection of the terror of that life. "He wasn't a member of a gang or anything," a black mother is quoted in the papers after the slaughter of her son: "Someone at Ribs-'n-Bibs just thought David was laughing at him."

In the meantime all this is the most frequent, acceptable topic of ordinary everyday conversation. Our fear is becoming socialized. Moving is a constant theme: one friend who has been raped, burglarized, and had her car stolen (three separate occasions), is still considering leaving Hyde Park. There are plenty of reasons for leaving. The rents are as high here as anywhere in the city, and the food prices are even higher—typical of slum communities, a captive market, no competition. The same goes for other goods and services. There are only two movie-houses in all of Hyde Park, indeed for many miles around; restaurants and businesses close early (more and more, they close for good); there are no gathering places. There is no lively night life—how could there be? People are too afraid to go out at night. It is just an island surrounded by the defoliation of the slums.

And yet none of these is a real motivation for leaving. The fact is that most people have come to Hyde Park in the first place just because of the things it does not have. And I realized this morning that "security" is not the main thing either. Once you have lived in a place like Hyde Park you will never feel "secure" again anywhere anyway; you will know—or you ought to know—that "security" is an expensive illusion. We can't all climb into the fall-out shelters. In my grandmother's neighborhood, Uptown, it is the notorious desolation, the poverty, that is the constant reminder of what the real facts are; in my neighborhood—so much more green and affluent from its rooftops—it is the tension between blacks and whites. And I believe that the real reason people want to leave is not so much that they think they will feel "safer" anywhere else, or so that they will be able to go out to a movie at night: it is because they don't like their own automatic responses any more. That's what they want to get away from. They want to halt the fatal conditioning process that is dehumanizing us.

"AREN'T you going to come in?" Rudy asked, sticking his head and shoulders in at the window. We had only stopped long enough to drop Roxy off so she could get back to the children; but he seemed disappointed. "*Her*," he elaborated, prodding his jaw at me. "I want her to come in and see my wallpaper."

With anyone else this might have meant that he had something he wanted to say to me in private; but not with Rudy. This will never happen, Rudy will never speak his heart. I followed his ponderous shoulders into the house. The landlord lives next door, and his side of the front porch is even more sagging, swaying, and peeling than theirs. But the rent is cheap, and they have a sort of mutual nonaggression pact: they won't expect any upkeep, he won't expect any raises. He's an old Swede, gaunt, bald, deaf,

toothless, and he just doesn't want to be bothered. Something Rudy understands.

Rudy is an honest cop. When my high-school sweetheart joined the force—he couldn't wait to get on the take—Rudy told me right away he would never last. "They don't want that kind any more." I am sorry to say I don't know who was right, but the point is, Rudy is not a cynic. And anybody has enough brains to be cynical. He is immutable, incorruptible, that is the real truth of his nature. How could you buy him? How could you approach him? He has no greed, he has no vanity; a threat would only invoke his obstinacy—the most powerful, obdurate, inertial force of all. It would be like trying to bribe Starved Rock.

As soon as we got inside, Rudy pointed out—he's so literal—the wallpaper in the living-room, a large crowded pattern on a gold ground. "Roxy put it up." Stroking the wall.

"When was that?"

"It's been two years," Roxy said.

The children in the meantime had gone out to the car to say hello to Bubby—my grandmother. In a minute the little boy in his long pants and baseball jacket—tiny, with enormous horn-rimmed glasses—came running back, bursting with excitement. "*Guess who's in the car?*" he said, grinning up at us through the thick dark frames wider than his face, the one eye tugging at its inner corner, irresistibly. "*Bubby! Bubby!*" He ran back out again, with heavy tread.

Rudy tugged at my sleeve. "Come see the wallpaper in the kitchen too." It was an attractive patterned vinyl, and it covered the ceiling. "Roxy put it up with a broom," Rudy told me, gazing up at the gloomily high ceilings, his small head ducked between his shoulders. Roxy is very handy around the house, and she knits, crochets, sews to perfection—the handicraft of her Kentucky hills. The place is full of her work; Rudy wandered about, fingering scraps, cloths, pillows, quilts: "Roxy did this too." At last he shoved a great padded book at me—a photograph album—carefully exchanging it for the cup of water I was fetching for my grandmother.

"Sit down and look at this, I'll bring her the water."

He seemed very insistent. It was no use, I didn't try to argue; I sank down in the wing-back chair and the two tall girls came and stood shyly behind it, looking over my shoulder as I turned the pages in my lap.

Their baby pictures, snapshots of vacations: the grim isolated South. Roxy decamps several times a year, goes home to her mother who runs a gas station. In several photos I noticed a beautiful, sturdy blonde child with fat pouting cheeks and built like the baby Hercules. I asked Roxy who she was. Rudy had found her abandoned in a hotel-room; he knew how she'd be shuttled about if he turned her over to the welfare people,

so he brought her home so Roxy could take care of her. When the mother showed up in due time, he gave the child back.

"Oh you get used to that living with Rudy."

Now the girls had sidled up on the arms of the chair, turning pages for me, showing me their school pictures. The whole class lined up in the gym on wooden benches, with hands folded in their laps—just the way we used to do it. The same grins with the teeth missing. Only now the pictures come in color, and the girls giggled and squealed as I pointed out their faces.

"Here—you wanna see Phoebe's report card?" Harriet said, waving the long manila envelope at me.

"Hey! No fair! Gimme that!" Phoebe said, snatching for it. I guess she's no scholar. So they started fighting, pummeling. "Dirty trick! Dirty trick!" I was ready to leave, but Rudy insisted I tour the basement first. His tall figure hulking and stooping ahead of me down the narrow stairs.

As HIGH as the ceilings are upstairs, they are that low in the basement. Rudy moved ahead of me in his slow wading way, his hands in his pockets, looking back over his shoulder, his head continually dodging the pipes. I had seen it all before: the laundry room with washer and dryer; the storage room with the kids' new bikes; his own retreat—an overstuffed rocker and an old-fashioned floorlamp with a scorched, parchment shade. I don't suppose he ever really uses it; the basement's dry enough but dingy, raw cement. He kept gazing all around, his head with its graying bristles retracting—shrugging, dismissing—as if he had forgotten what he was looking for. I was struck with the aimlessness of his wide back.

There was even a workshop; but the high, rough-hewn bench, the rough shelves were empty, except for an ashtray filled with ground-out cigarettes. It looked threadbare. "I don't know how to do nothing, so I don't use it," Rudy said, humbly, looking idly about with his hand on the light-string. He ducked his head under the door as we went out.

Against the wall was a bookcase lined with corrugated packages of light bulbs. If you pay your electric bill in person, you get them free. "You need light bulbs?" Rudy asked suddenly. "Here take some light bulbs," he said, catching at my sleeve. "What do you need? 40's? 60's? 100's? They're all here, take what you want."

He started turning over packages, examining them. "You need bigger ones? Here—here's 150. Here's 200." I didn't want to take any light bulbs home with me on the bus, but he seemed very anxious that I should take some. "Soft lights? Three-way? You like pink ones? We'll get a bag upstairs." He piled the weightless packages up on me. I held out my arms.

Roxanne wanted Rudy to take her to Osco's—they had a sale on yarn. When I got back into the car I saw that we had a stowaway: the little boy, squeezed between my mother's long skirts and my grandmother's green coat—his feet sticking straight up in their dark thick-soled shoes. But before Roxy even stuck her head in, his head popped up: "Hi Mommy! Hi Mommy! Hi Mommy!" he piped, poking his chin over the front seat and grinning through his glasses with crazy cockeyed charm.

My grandmother peered round, large-faced in her babushka: "What have you got in the bag?"

"Light bulbs." I was feeling very sad. I think maybe it was the light bulbs. They made me want to cry. Once again I was looking at the back of Rudy's neck: thick, remote. For he is remote—my uncle is a blunt and mysterious man to me.

His life flows in another direction, I shall never understand it. And yet I felt closer to him than to anyone I had seen all day. I felt that he had been trying to give me some message about his life; I sensed its powerlessness—but it moved me. Rudy and I are both outsiders, as far as the family is concerned. We are not in the mainstream. And we are made of the same raw material; even this unexpected surge of feeling for him was an obstinate, unpredictable force. I was wondering what role such forces must have played in my life. It always feels depleting to make these self-discoveries. Anyway, it makes a long day to go up north and see the family, and by this time I had realized that I was going to feel awfully tired when I finally got home—washed-out, weary, let-down, empty. Blue. Yes, very blue.

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Beauvoir's Last Revolt

Edward Grossman

THE unrelenting industry of Simone de Beauvoir is astounding, and it is almost as great as that of Sartre. Like her companion, she continues adding to an achievement and a career of a kind that new modes of education, communication, and illiteracy may soon render quaint, if not impossible. Beauvoir, among the earliest women to have haunted the libraries of the Sorbonne after World War I, may turn out to be the last of this formidable breed. Unless illness prevents her, however, she will probably keep on dutifully working and producing until she dies. What she can find as a subject to write about after *The Coming of Age** is not clear, for this book looks like a culmination; but she will doubtless find something to engage her energy.

The Coming of Age (in French, less poetically and ambiguously, *La Vieillesse*) is about old age, in approximately the same way *The Second Sex* was about women. Critics and readers who brought large and small complaints against Beauvoir's feminist book will have the same ones to make against *The Coming of Age*, with equal justice. Beauvoir does not have a subtle or original mind, and her style—with fleeting exceptions—is plodding. She has apparently devoured whole libraries, but digested them incompletely. Her syntheses are a little too pat, and often betray the fact that she has swallowed the work of three men in particular (Marx, Freud, and Sartre) uncritically. She is still in the habit, as she was in *The Second Sex*, of giving the reader long plot summaries of classics he has probably read. She hardly ever fails to provide six

illustrations when one or two would have been enough. She also, for all her thoroughness, often has a sloppy way about her. In *The Coming of Age*, for example, she says Lou Andreas-Salomé, the tormentor of Nietzsche, lover of Rilke, and student of Freud, was Jewish, which she wasn't, and she makes Dr. Spock ten years older than he is.

Such complaints are well-founded, but they miss the point of Beauvoir's virtues. These are doggedness, sincerity, courage, and a certain ameliorative intention that resists experience and refuses to surrender to pessimism. The complaints might also obscure the specific virtue and agony of this book on old age, which constitutes a long struggle on the writer's part to hold on to her cheerfulness despite the worst that time can do. More interesting than the usual complaints is a question that is as unfair as it is inevitable, and one that need not necessarily be asked in bad faith, or due to a misunderstanding: would old age be as fearsome for the writer as it seems to be had she led a different life?

EVEN though she is French, and a woman, Beauvoir has had a fairly cheerful outlook for most of her life, so far as a reader can tell. This is reflected in the books which she has written about herself in the unsparing manner of Rousseau and Gide, as well as in such a presumably impersonal study as *The Second Sex*. The reader pictures her rebelling against her family joyfully, not morbidly; plunging into reading, writing, exam-taking, with zest; traveling, winning prizes, becoming famous, in stride. The Occupation didn't disturb her life much, as she admits somewhat guiltily. From the time she leaves home until a certain moment around

the age of fifty, the only important pain or hateful feeling she confesses experiencing is caused by romantic complications. She describes the difficulties of free companionship—especially the pangs of jealousy—in *She Came to Stay* and *The Mandarins*. But although these books are serious, they aren't bleak or really troubled. They are the work of a creator enjoying the activity of her chosen vocation. Her second book of autobiography, *The Prime of Life*, bears out the impression that as far as she was concerned she was living a satisfactorily pleasurable and interesting life. It is only toward the middle of the following volume, *Force of Circumstance*, that for the first time genuinely unhappy notes begin to be struck. This is at roughly the same point that Beauvoir begins telling how it was for her to live through the years of the Algerian war. She says it disturbed her more than the Occupation did. The terrorist bombing of Sartre's apartment, the sight of French soldiers in St.-Germain-des-Prés, the news of tortures, made her ashamed to be French, she says, and imbued her with a new, actually unprecedented hatred against her "class." Her temper loses its evenness around the middle of *Force of Circumstance*. She begins to use a language, first when writing of political matters, that is almost strident.

In the midst of the Algerian troubles, she has an affair with a much younger man, an editor on the staff of Sartre's magazine. According to her account, this both consoled and confused her. By the end of the book, both the affair and the war are over. The book closes with the writer ruminating on the approach of her "old age." She curses the class from which she comes, not for what it did in Algeria, but for the false notions about life that it planted in her head when she was young, which in spite of rebellion she has carried through adulthood, and which

EDWARD GROSSMAN's forthcoming book, *To the Top of Mount Sinai*, will include the present essay.

* Translated by Patrick O'Brian, Putnam, 585 pp., \$10.00.

she must now prepare to pay for. *J'ai été flouée*—"I was had for a sucker!"—are the last words of the book, much quoted, and, according to Beauvoir, much misunderstood.

Not long after, Beauvoir's mother died and the writer wrote a little book about her death, *A Very Easy Death*. This is a terrible book in the uncommon sense. Beauvoir never ideologized her parents in print, even when she said she was repelled by their lives and refused to be bound by their customs. She described both her mother and father always as particular human beings, never as types. If the reader is to believe her, her mother's protracted, hopeless fight with cancer provoked the most painful crisis Beauvoir has ever had to face. She says that she was surprised that it was so shattering for her. Recounting it, she begins to try to deal, as if it were for the first time seriously (at the age of fifty-six), with her own mortality. Ever since this book, the themes of aging and death, and their meaning especially for women, have preoccupied her. Into the soliloquy of an aging woman character in a novella entitled *The Woman Destroyed* Beauvoir puts the cry, "I'm afraid."

It is appropriate, then, that Beauvoir should have come to write *The Coming of Age*, which seems to be a study of the "situation" of aging and old people in the way *The Second Sex* was a study of the "situation" of women. It uses the same method. First the "biology" is presented (as if to admit a certain primacy), then the anthropology and history of the "problem," the evidence from literature, present-day statistics, and finally, needs and prospects. All this is presented seriously, massively, faithful to the Existential terminology. But *The Coming of Age*, besides being shorter and somewhat less dense than *The Second Sex*, is essentially different from it. *The Coming of Age* is harsh, painful, far from optimistic, and it includes direct testimony—which the feminist book did not—of the writer's own experience. "I've never met a woman, either in literature or in life," she reports, "who had an un-

troubled feeling about old age." The writer is no exception: she tries to convey the emotion she feels when she looks in the mirror and sees someone she doesn't recognize, whom she refuses to recognize as the same person who rebelled, studied, delighted in nature, and took good health for granted, who enjoyed self-esteem. Despite this, she has no wish to give up the life she has led. Yet others are conspiring to force her. For the eyes of Others are mirrors, crueler even than her own, and she feels herself changed, diminished, twisted in the reflection there. Aging is a mutilation of her body, therefore of herself, that she rebels against, rejects, as she rejected the mutilation that the "bourgeoisie" once proposed to inflict on her soul.

AGING signifies mutilation and diminution. The powers and senses are diminished, including a very important one for a writer, the power of remembering. Sartre mentions to her a significant event they witnessed together during the Occupation: Beauvoir searches her memory and finds—nothing. She is shocked. Age also means lowered resistance to disease, more sickness. Yet if Beauvoir is to be believed, the worst thing about getting old is not getting sick, or even losing strength and power—it is receiving the dehumanizing look of Others. This is an old established Existential formulation, and could be expected to get Beauvoir's attention in a study of the "situation" of any group; in *The Coming of Age* it gets considerably more than that.

One of the grounds the Other has for refusing the old person his humanity is that the old person's appearance is unattractively changed. Beauvoir is disgusted by such an excuse. Yet she is fascinated by the physical evidence. The examples of decline that she chooses from literature include the merciless self-portraits of men like Voltaire, but the most affecting are pictures of the decline of women.

Whatever they look like, old people are human beings with human appetites and needs, which they are hard put to satisfy. But again, maybe this is more painful

and humiliating for a woman than for a man. The very few comparatively happy old people Beauvoir manages to turn up are rich and healthy male artists. There are no women Picassos. Beauvoir does not attempt a full-scale treatment of this difference. "Older men have no special disturbance of their spermatozoa; theoretically, their 'senile' sperm can go on fertilizing eggs indefinitely," she has noted in her "biology" section, while "The reproductive capacity of women is brutally cut off at a relatively young age." But though she is fascinated by what the mirror tells, Beauvoir does not do more than pass on this suggestive biological datum. She does not stay to try to draw out some possible consequences in social and cultural terms of this difference—if indeed the possibility of consequences has occurred to her—nor the connection between internal bodily differences and the unequal external signs of aging in men and women. Though biology comes first in her book on age, as it did in her book on women, she quickly proceeds to other "aspects."

The arrangements various societies have made to deal with their older people provoke her curiosity, approval, and criticism. She is hard on capitalist societies, and impressed with socialist societies. Sometimes it is as if Beauvoir thinks that old age in a capitalist society is a qualitatively different experience from old age in a socialist society, although a fair and complete reading of her book would probably show she doesn't think this. What she says she is horrified by in France is the "abandonment" of the old. She demands that the state provide them with necessities such as shelter, medicine, clothing, and food.

This demand is congruent with the humanistic component of Existentialism as worked out by Sartre. The author herself, however, in spite of the fact that she has the money to provide herself with the tangible necessities without anyone's help, is still evidently in trouble. As she has said, aged or aging people are human—they have intangible needs too. One of these is to be looked at as human, looked at (the reader infers) with

desire. The anguish in *The Coming of Age* is real, palpable, felt. It is not the "anguish" that is present merely as a philosophical formulation. And it is not just the anguish of an aging person, but specifically the anguish of an aging woman. The way Beauvoir confronts it is remarkable, not least because of her courage, but also because it is a confrontation she posited, agreed to, anticipated long ago, as a philosopher, a novelist, an autobiographer: yet for all that the confrontation is as if for the first time, and it is uniquely shocking.

Beauvoir once told an interviewer:

I've always been keenly aware of the passing of time. I've always thought that I was old. Even when I was twelve. I thought it was awful to be thirty. I felt that something was lost. At the same time, I was aware of what I could gain, and certain periods of my life have taught me a great deal. But, in spite of everything, I've always been haunted by the passing of time and by the fact that death keeps closing in on us. For me, the problem of time is linked up with that of death, with the thought that we inevitably draw closer and closer to it, with the horror of decay. It's that, rather than the fact that things disintegrate, that love peters out. That's horrible too, though I personally have never been troubled by it. There's always been great continuity in my life. I've always lived in Paris, more or less in the same neighborhoods. My relationship with Sartre has lasted a very long time. I have very old friends whom I continue to see. So it's not that I've felt that time breaks things up, but rather the fact that I always take my bearings.

It is true that even before *A Very Easy Death*, in much of Beauvoir's writing, almost from the beginning, there was a preoccupation with time, aging, decrepitude, death. At the age of forty, she wrote a didactic novel (*All Men Are Mortal*) in which an "immortal" being illogically proves to an actress who is frightened of aging and death that Existential anguish would still be her lot, even if she could count on living forever. But these anticipations seem formal. In her classic fem-

inist book, Beauvoir's descriptions of the stages by which a woman enters old age, and of old age itself, are imagined, researched, observed, or wished for, rather than experienced, and they do not tally with the descriptions of the same phenomena that she presents twenty year later. In both *The Second Sex* and *The Coming of Age*, Beauvoir distinguishes among menopause, "maturity," old age, and death. They are stations along the way in a woman's life, different "situations" in a process, and only an extremely disturbed woman would believe that, having arrived at the first station, she has arrived at death. Apparently, such a woman would be the one who had led a life that would cause her to feel destroyed, *rompue*, once she lacks what menopause takes away from her. Or as Beauvoir said in *The Second Sex*, "The crisis of the 'change of life' is felt much less keenly by women who have not staked everything on their femininity." Put archetypically, a movie actress ought to be more profoundly affected by the very thought of menopause (or even the loss of looks that begins for a woman at thirty-five), than a woman university professor. Yet this is not only crude but, according to the testimony in *The Coming of Age*, not true. It doesn't matter very much (maybe someday it will) what life a woman has led mentally or how she earns her living: she will not necessarily be rewarded for having lived a "right" life by having an easier time when the stage of transition into "maturity" comes—when, in biological terms, she loses the ability to bear children, and her body loses the last of its power to excite desire. According to *The Coming of Age*, lifemanship, "*savoir-vivre*" in the old-fashioned sense that the French moralists have always been interested in, isn't rewarded, because "mutilation" is both "gratuitous" and universal. It happens to everyone who does not die young, and it is as unjust and absurd for the university professor as for the movie actress. And if old age is a mutilation, it begins early for women—at the menopause, in fact, or earlier. Already in *The Second Sex*, having made distinc-

tions among the stages in a woman's life, Beauvoir blurred them:

From the day a woman consents to growing old, her situation changes. Up to that time she was still a young woman, intent on struggling against a misfortune that was mysteriously disfiguring and deforming her; now she becomes a different creature, unsexed but complete: an old woman. . . . It is in the autumn and winter of life that woman is freed from her chains.

It is impossible to know whether Beauvoir wrote these lines believing them, or out of bravado; but it is certain, from the vocabulary and phrasing and context, that she was not being ironical. In *The Coming of Age*, however, these lines could serve as an example of exactly the sort of sickly, hypocritical, and malicious myth that Beauvoir wants to expose. "*Un être asexué*"—the unsexed, or desexed creature—is no longer "looked-at," she is no longer the passive thing, the object that is said in *The Second Sex* to be viewed and used; and that should be all to the good. But in *The Coming of Age* that *être asexué* is not a slave set free from her chains. Instead, she is liable to be anguished, particularly when age has just begun to set in; she no longer feels herself a human being; she is turning into a corpse before her own eyes; she is undesired, unable any longer to be or hope to become that reciprocating, passionate, equal partner that Beauvoir urged women to become in *The Second Sex*. But for the suffering she experiences, this woman might be said to have died.

Now, instead of "consenting" to what ought to be her liberation, the writer, when it happens to her, "rebels" against it. She does not rebel, she says, against death. As a good Existentialist, she must perceive that the certain prospect of death gives life its valuable "dimension of the absolute." She rebels, she says, not against death but against old age, and the means to this rebellion is an existence that continues to be active, presumably and not least of all, sexually. It is important to her that this fit in with the comprehensive

philosophy that she has long subscribed to. An Existentialist sees that Man is alone, that he must die, and that there is no way even to pose questions about the existence of God. Human existence is therefore absurd. The only way a human being can give meaning to his existence is by his own actions which tend to realize some sort of human "essence" latent in him, which seems to have to do with an ethical or social impulse. Existentialism (especially as enunciated by Sartre and echoed by Beauvoir) is simultaneously a pessimistic and optimistic doctrine. It demands that we behave as if we were not alone, as if God existed, as if we weren't going to be obliterated by death. These "as ifs" are themselves absurd. There is no way to prove that we are not alone, each one inside his (her) own skin, and no way to prove that God exists. But death is certainly in store for everyone—the man who has existed all his life "like a stone" (Sartre's image), and also the man who has discovered and expressed his essential humanity. Both will die, and death will make their lives equal, and equally meaningless. This absurdity has vitiated all philosophies of action and change. It cannot be overcome, it can only be "rebelled against."

Révolte, révolter—rebellion, to rebel: these words are taking a long time to be consumed in France. For a person of Beauvoir's generation, they probably have a more central, and permanent, significance than they have for the youngsters in the cafés of the Latin Quarter, who also use them in their speech and writings. Metaphysical *révolte* harks back to Gide, one of the writers whose books the young Beauvoir came of age with. Political *révolte* was epitomized in the Resistance, and during the Algerian war. When Beauvoir uses these words she uses them with sufficient awareness of the meanings they have had, and at the same time, with a certain helpless defiance. To rebel against old age—is this not excessive? Camus might have been thinking of this sort of defiance when he wrote in *The Rebel*:

It is difficult to return to the places of one's early happiness. The young girls in the flower of their youth still laugh and chatter on the seashore, but he who watches them gradually loses the right to love them, just as those he has loved lose the power to be loved.

Beauvoir has elsewhere in her work made it abundantly plain that she agreed with Sartre that in *The Rebel*, Camus went over to preaching a warmed-over stoicism. To remain defiant, to grow ever more defiant with age—this is Sartre's desire, and Beauvoir, here as in some other things, has seemed to try to do her best to follow his lead. She is both less and more than a cut-rate Sartre, however, and this program of permanent rebellion has entailed consequences that are peculiar to her and to what may be called, using Sartre's terminology, her "situation" as a woman. As she perhaps inadvertently reveals, her anguish and rebellion against age are specifically the anguish and rebellion of a woman. This revelation can easily be misunderstood. Unfriendly readers who have kept up with Beauvoir's work through the years to see how the "story" ends may wish to think that this anguish is of a woman who wrote certain books and advocated feminism. For them, her life-long *révolte* turns out to be pathetic in retrospect, not admirable; childish in the undesirable sense, not courageous. Beauvoir "pays" for having led the wrong life (especially for not marrying or having children) by experiencing a painful old age—no matter that she has described for the philistine reader the long agony of Freud, showing that the "right" life isn't necessarily rewarded. The unfriendly or slow-witted reader is treated to the sight of the writer squirming instead of consenting to becoming old, as she had advised women to do when she was younger and wrote her feminist book. It is like the satisfaction a believer might get at seeing an atheist wavering on his death-bed. Some of Beauvoir's readers may be happy to take *The Coming of Age* as the sign that she has lost her nerve, and they can quote her wistful

sentence, "The warmest and happiest feelings that old people have are the ones which are aroused in them by their grandchildren."

This is a prejudiced misreading. In *The Coming of Age* Beauvoir is not renouncing her life or the choices she made, any more than she did in *Force of Circumstance*, where she exclaimed that she had been swindled by her upbringing. Moreover, it is doubtful whether old age would hold no terrors for her had she bothered to go through the motions of having children and grandchildren: she is what she is. But to reject the malicious or dim-witted interpretations does not yet answer the question whether Beauvoir might have been able credibly to imagine aging as a different and possibly less fearsome experience for some people if her life had included the experience of child-rearing—an experience which, while not universal, is still widespread. Are some men and women able to "gain" from old age, as Beauvoir says she gained from each preceding stage of life, and is this sometimes thanks to an unexamined feeling that they are plugged into the continuity of generations? Beauvoir seems to have had only a glimmer of this possibility. Her remark about the consolation of grandchildren is by-the-way. The weighty message of her book is that old age is a misfortune, made absolutely disastrous by illness or poverty, and only alleviated somewhat by a relentlessly active and curious mind that keeps engaging itself in starting projects and bringing them to fruition. "If life does not transcend itself," she writes, "moving toward given ends, and if it falls back, dull and motionless, upon itself, then it brings about that 'nausea' which Sartre has described."

This reads like a truism, and it makes young Roquentin, the anti-hero of *Nausea*, sound like a drop-out from a course in Positive Thinking, which is probably not what Sartre intended. But more important than that, it rephrases an old exhortation that is valid for men and women of Beauvoir's bourgeois temperament: work to stay alive!

Dr. Coles among the Poor

Joseph Epstein

IT is a strange business, the sudden popular success of people who do intellectual work in America. Although decades may have gone into the making of their reputations, fame—the actual moment at which their names, so to speak, go public—seems to come on with great suddenness. All at once, as though by some hidden consensus, they are granted a sort of general public license as authorities: their names start to crop up on television talk shows, soon afterward they begin to appear more and more frequently in person—shyly at first, then with increasing confidence as they find themselves treated as headliners on all sides. The next thing one knows, there they are on the cover of *Time* or *Newsweek* (or both), having successfully negotiated that mysterious leap from the closed circle of their peers to national celebrity.

There is always a reason for this sudden elevation of an intellectual to prominence, and it usually has to do with more than mere professional achievement. In some cases, it is bound up directly, and in a fairly obvious way, with some issues of the moment—as in the case of James Baldwin and the civil-rights movement, or Kate Millett and Women's Lib. In other cases—one thinks of Paul Goodman or Erik Erikson—what is involved is less tangible: a sudden change in public mood which overnight makes a fairly arcane or difficult body of work seem unexpectedly relevant. In every case, however, including that of the psychiatrist Robert Coles, the intellectual most recently to have traveled this road, the matter is worth studying for

the insights it can offer into what is going on in the country at any given moment.

Though Coles, in a period of about ten years, has written thirteen books (four of them in collaboration) and no fewer than 350 magazine articles (according to *Time's* recent cover story on him), it is not chiefly as a writer that he has become famous. While his prose may not be crippled by the psychiatric jargon of so many of his colleagues, neither is it particularly memorable either for stylistic felicity or for evidence of intellectual originality. Rather, the body of his work, at least in its more casual expression in magazine pieces, is largely remarkable for the appealing persona it projects. Reading Coles's articles over the years (and there was a time when he seemed to be in every issue of every magazine one picked up), one gradually came to think of him as a kind of Ralph Nader of social psychiatry. Indeed, the two even look rather alike—both lean and open-faced, both slightly rumpled, as if to suggest that the day is too brief to give over any part of it to considerations of vanity. Both men seem to be airborne much of the time—off on missions of good work which will involve some championing of the underdog against his oppressors. Viewed from the middle distance—the vantage point of the television viewer or the magazine reader—both seem to represent the best America has to offer: youth, unbounded energy, unswinging seriousness, idealism shorn of the sour malice that so often has seemed to accompany it lately in America. Allowing the mind to skip off into fantastical political pastures, one could dally with the thought of Nader as President of the United States and Coles as his ideal Secretary of

the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Oblivious to fashion, Coles has remained doggedly interested in the same subject throughout his professional career: the migrant workers, children integrating public schools in the South, unemployed Appalachian whites, and impoverished urban and rural blacks who make up America's lower class. For a brief period, in the early 1960's, the country as a whole seemed to share Coles's interest in this subject. Then a shift took place and the poor were suddenly shunted aside to make way for another cast of characters altogether: a mixed bag of angry people—including students, women, and homosexuals—who claimed an equal right to call themselves victims, not on grounds of material need, but for deprivation of another kind. Thus, the wretched of the earth, one might say, were displaced by the wretched of the psyche. The latter's ease in capturing the spotlight is not particularly difficult to explain: as members of the middle class, and hence on the whole better educated, the wretched of the psyche have been far cleverer at getting the attention of the media. More original in their rhetoric and more outlandish in their exploits, they are simply, in the raw journalistic sense of the term, "better copy."

YET the new disaffection would probably never have come to dominate public attention had there not been a deep and genuine feeling of despondency about the possibility of doing anything at all to alleviate the misery of the truly wretched, the wretched of the earth. This despair has touched black and white, poor and well-to-do alike, as the multitude of economic, educational, and cultural programs launched amid great fanfare in the early 1960's have appeared to fall short of really spectacular achievement—the only kind of achievement that would have satisfied the expectations raised. All the rhetoric, publicity, political

JOSEPH EPSTEIN, whose articles and reviews appear regularly in these pages, is working on a book about divorce.

pressure, and calls to militance have seemed to result in not much more than a mess of ethnic potage, scant reassurance in the face of serious material deprivation, while whatever concrete gains have been made in income distribution and in patterns of housing and employment have either been ignored or dismissed as tokenism.

No doubt, there is a certain emotional comfort to be had in believing, as some profess to do, that the entire issue is reducible to the fact of a deeply ingrained racism in American whites—though to grant that premise is to assert that there is nothing to do but sit back and await the apocalypse. But what if the problem is of a different order entirely? What if we have failed to do anything substantial about our enormous range of social problems—poverty, the schools, the cities, and all the rest of it—not because we don't want to, but because, beyond a certain point, we simply don't know *how* to? Small wonder, in the face of this likelihood, that the country should turn its attention, with a sense of relief, even, to the wretched of the psyche, people whose troubles by comparison seem positively benign.

But the poor, of course, will not be so obliging as to go away; so even while the hope of actually doing something tangible to alleviate their condition has never been at a lower ebb, the need to make some gesture of concern for their existence, if only as a matter of conscience, seems to grow more burning every day. Is the recent overwhelming recognition that has been accorded the work of Robert Coles such a gesture? In part, it seems to be. Something about the fervor and the unanimity of critical response to the publication of his latest book, *The South Goes North*,* suggests that some expiatory impulse is at work. Except for one grumbling review in the *Times* by a Women's Liberationist, the praise for Coles has been unstinting. *Time* called him "the most influential living psychiatrist in the U.S." *Newsweek* invoked no less a psychologist than Kafka himself by way of comparison. Kenneth Clark has com-

mented that Coles's presence in American life "keeps morality, decency, and justice alive." Harry Caudill called his new book "the definitive work on America's poor and powerless in the twentieth century."

The work that has generated this extraordinary response, and the foundation on which Coles's reputation rests, is an ongoing study of the American poor titled *Children of Crisis*. The three volumes thus far published (all by Atlantic-Little, Brown) already add up to more than 1,700 pages. The first, *A Study of Courage and Fear*,† was published five years ago and is about the integration of Southern schools following upon the Supreme Court's 1954 desegregation decision. The second, *Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers*,** deals with the lives of these three groups in today's South. The third volume, *The South Goes North*, is about the exodus of migrants, sharecroppers, and mountaineers from a land that will no longer support their survival even on a subsistence level into the cities of the North. Coles is apparently now at work on a fourth volume, tentatively titled *Chicanos, Eskimos, and Indians*, and additional ones may well follow, for he has described this present project as his "life's work."

PERHAPS the most striking thing about *Children of Crisis* is how difficult it is to classify. Though Coles is by profession and training a child psychiatrist, his work does not at all seem to belong to the standard literature of psychiatry, notwithstanding the debt that Coles acknowledges in all three volumes to his mentors, Anna Freud and Erik Erikson. Coles does use the clinician's method of extended in-depth interviews as the basis of the book, and he does, in dealing with children, make use of such standard techniques as having the children express their views about themselves and the world around them by means of drawings and paintings. But his interpretations of such material are for the most part intuitive and

commonsensical—free of the usual psychiatric esoterica. Indeed, on the few occasions when Coles does employ such terms as paranoid, schizophrenic, or manic-depressive—terms so widely used by now that they can scarcely be called clinical—he does so in quotation marks, a kind of typographical signal of contempt for the inadequacy of such language to capture the range of human behavior. (In Volume I of *Children of Crisis* Coles does make one minor foray into an interpretation of behavior along traditional psychoanalytic lines. It has to do with a fat white woman in New Orleans who used to lie in wait for the Negro children who were integrating the school in her neighborhood so that she could scream threats at them; once she threatened to poison a little Negro girl. Coles links the woman's hatred of Negroes to her passion for chocolates, the chocolates being the cause of her obesity and obesity the cause of the loneliness and frustration in her life. Ingenious—and utterly unconvincing! In his subsequent volumes Coles wisely stays clear of such capers.)

IF COLES is not writing as a psychiatrist in *Children of Crisis*, exactly what did he have in mind as he spent the better part of a decade toting his tape-recorder into the hollows of Appalachia and the Florida cotton fields; along the path of migrant workers up the Atlantic coast and into the Black Belt of the South where sharecroppers and tenant farmers still fight the land and a vicious feudal agricultural system for survival? Primarily, he tells us, he has sought not to diagnose or to prescribe, but first of all to understand—to understand America's most consistently humiliated people, not in their familiar aspect as "social problems," but in the concretion of their day-to-day lives: in their joys, sorrows, hopes, and frustrations, in their thoughts no less than in their actions, in the jolts the world regularly sends their way and the techniques they have developed to cushion those jolts and wrest a measure of dignity and self-respect from a hostile or indifferent environment.

* Atlantic-Little, Brown, 687 pp., \$12.50.

† 401 pp., \$8.50.

** 653 pp., \$12.50.

To study people as they really are—in their “innerness,” as Coles puts it—one must first chip away at the stereotypes in which they have been encased. This Coles often does remarkably well. Some of the most memorable incidents in the book are those in which, by the modest expedient of asking people questions about their own lives, he actually learns something altogether different from what he—and the reader—might have expected to hear. One thinks, for example, of the black boy from a solid, secure, and happy background who fared far worse in the crisis atmosphere of the early days of integration than a number of children from shakier homes; or of the white mother in New Orleans who allowed her four children to pioneer the integration of their school not—as it turns out—because of her principles, but because the alternative of having the children around the house all day seemed a fate worse even than race-mixing. Such findings—and they are strewn through the book—are of inestimable importance as a corrective to our usual ways of thinking about social problems. It is important and useful to be reminded, for example, that people—even in the tensest political situations—usually act more out of quotidian than ideological concerns. It is similarly important to have some of our more cherished pieties on the subject of child-rearing occasionally exploded.

Yet it is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain a work of this magnitude on the principle of direct observation and the anti-stereotype impulse alone, though Coles tries very hard to do so. Few writers have been more chary than he of generalization, few more unwilling to discern overall patterns or to draw conclusions on the basis of extended observation. Lest his own or another's preconceptions inadvertently be allowed to violate the integrity of his material, Coles reduces his presence in the work to the barest minimum, and presents his findings, as far as possible, in the words of his subjects. The result is a gigantic body of raw data (about two-thirds of the material is quotation) which in the end proves self-defeating. In the

general din of talk, not only by the poor but by those who live and work among them—police-men, firemen, welfare workers, ministers, plantation owners, migrant crew leaders, and slum landlords—no single voice can really be heard. Observations which in another context would be arresting and memorable are drowned out by a flood of garrulousness which in the end proves infinitely fatiguing and the very opposite of illuminating.

WHAT *Children of Crisis* lacks is precisely an organizing sensibility that might have provided a center to the work as the sensibility of George Orwell did, for example, to *The Road to Wigan Pier*—and indeed, a comparison between these two authors, both of whom deal with the lives of people at the very bottom of society, is as irresistible as it is probably unfair. Orwell, with a minimum of direct quotation, conveyed in 118 pages a more vivid sense of the lives of the poor than Coles has in a work ten times as long. For all its obsession with detail, *Children of Crisis* is peculiarly thin in places where one would have expected it to be dense with particularity. It is not only that Coles is silent on such obviously pertinent matters as how much people earn for a day's work in the fields, how much they spend for food, how large is the welfare check that comes once a week—matters that Orwell loved to compute down to the last halfpenny; he is also peculiarly inattentive in matters of personal detail. When he tells us, for example, that migrant workers spend the whole day from sunup to sunset stooped over in the fields and picking crops with only a sandwich and a bottle of soda pop for lunch, we learn exactly that—no more and no less. But Orwell would have reported what a middle-class back, a back like his own, accustomed to spending the day in an office chair, would feel like at the end of such a grueling day; he would have checked into the contents, and especially the smell, of that sandwich, and noted the thumb prints on the bread. He would, in other words, have become the migrant worker himself for an instant, as

he became the haunting old woman in the Wigan slum, about whom he wrote: “One woman's face stays by me, a worn skull-like face on which was a look of intolerable misery and degradation. I gathered that in that dreadful pigsty, struggling to keep her large brood of children clean, she felt as I should feel if I were coated all over with dung.”

It is inconceivable that Coles could have written such a sentence. To begin with, it would violate the sacred principle of non-intervention which is the hallmark of the tape-recorder method. More important, it would probably seem to him an impudent attempt to foist his own point of view, his own sensibility—above all, his own value system—upon his subjects. For in all the books which, like Coles's, have won acclaim recently for their use of the documentary method—one thinks first and foremost of the late Oscar Lewis's studies of Mexican and Puerto Rican families—a common assumption operates: that there is some special merit in having the poor speak out for themselves because what they have to say is more illuminating than what some middle-class observer could possibly bring to bear on the subject. This assumption is permeated, of course, by a kind of reverse cultural snobbism. If the anthropologist of the past was in perpetual danger of patronizing his subjects for their benighted condition—the dread sin of ethnocentrism—today's observer is more likely to believe that his own culture is not only not better, but far worse than the one he is observing.

George Orwell could say valuable and important things about poverty and what it does to people out of his own strong and unabashed repugnance to it. Coles, on the other hand, is perpetually apologizing for his presumption in having intruded on the scene at all. If the dominant tone of *The Road to Wigan Pier* is anger, the dominant tone of *Children of Crisis* is ambivalence. Indeed, the two-sidedness of every subject Coles touches upon is perceived so incessantly, that it becomes a kind of tic in the prose. Thus, Coles will grant that many Negro fam-

ilies are headed by mothers, only to add that he has also come across "sturdy, tough, outspoken black fathers"; he finds himself intellectually opposed to the views of a certain radical organizer, only to discover a moment later an emotional sympathy with the man's position; he notes that slum buildings are often terribly neglected, but that on the other hand some landlords try to keep to decent standards. And so it goes—for every rule, an exception; for every possibility, an alternate possibility.

THERE is a variety of understanding that surpasses understanding—a way of carrying moderation to excess. At one point in this work Coles remarks: "I emphasize the mind's maneuvers, its tensions, hopes, fears, ambiguities." But Coles more than emphasizes them—he demonstrates them in his own person. True, *Children of Crisis* offers much information about the poor in American society, but it is no less instructive as a portrait of the prototypical liberal who, by virtue of understanding everything, finally disqualifies himself from taking a position on anything.

In an odd way, the net effect of Coles's work is to exonerate us all—though this was of course the last thing he had in mind when setting out on his vast enterprise. If such a good and decent man—and a psychiatrist at that—could spend ten years trying to "understand" his subject, and confess himself at the end no less bewildered and incompetent and helpless at the complexity of it all than he was at the beginning, can the rest of us possibly be expected to do any better? Small wonder, then, that the work of such a man, so perfectly mirroring the confusion and helplessness we all feel—and, in effect, granting us amnesty into the bargain—should become so famous in its time, and have attracted such fervid admiration. As Sainte-Beuve said: "Enthusiastic admirers are a little like accomplices: they worship themselves, with all their own qualities and defects, in their great representatives. Tell me who admires and loves you, and I will tell you who you are."

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Crumbling the Barricades

SOCIALISM. By MICHAEL HARRINGTON. *Saturday Review Press*. 436 pp. \$12.50.

Reviewed by RUDOLF KLEIN

A SPECTER is haunting the world—the specter of failed socialism. In the century and a quarter since Karl Marx wrote the words parodied in that sentence, as the opening of the Manifesto of the Communist party, socialism has attracted the idealism of millions and provided rallying cries for countless political movements. Even those who have betrayed it most brutally—Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, among many others—have usually done so in its name. All that is missing is an example of socialism, uncontaminated by totalitarianism, actually working. There are plenty of examples of collectivist dictatorships and well-intentioned social-reform movements. But socialism—a system which, in the eyes of its disciples, seeks to reconcile the requirements of democracy, social justice, and liberty and to create a society in which men and women respect each other in their diversity and develop, at work or at leisure, their full potentialities—remains a secular vision: respected by all, adopted by none.

The attraction of Michael Harrington's book is that he is a socialist who is clear-eyed and honest about this predicament. He does not fall into the trap of wish-fulfillment—of hailing the latest hero-figure of the Left, whether he be Castro or Mao Tse-tung, as the Moses who has led his country into the promised land of socialism and so set an example to the rest of the world. Equally he is skeptical

about the tactics of the Western European social-democratic parties: he argues that the welfare-state policies of the European Left, whether of Harold Wilson's Labour party in Britain or of Willy Brandt's Social Democrats in West Germany, have failed to deliver the goods of socialism—and that the distribution of wealth and power in these countries has not greatly changed.

So in this book Harrington goes back to the drawing board in an attempt to design a doctrine of socialism relevant to what Daniel Bell has called post-industrial society. Rejecting both what he regards as the ineffective reformism of traditional liberalism and the utopian anarchism of New-Left revolutionaries, he tries to present an alternative analysis. The starting point of this analysis is Marx. But it is what might be called the "real-Marx" as distinct from the "pseudo-Marx"—that is, Harrington's own interpretation of Marx's writing, not the popular, simplified version of Marxism. In line with recent fashions in Marxology, the emphasis is put on Marx the humanist as distinct from Marx the revolutionary authoritarian—the Marx who had a vision of man emancipated from the tyranny of machine-dictated work routines, fulfilling himself as a complete human being instead of being frustrated by the social superstructure of a capitalist economy.

This is a perfectly fair, if not exactly novel, reinterpretation. However, in historical reinterpretation as in picture restoration, there is always the danger that in removing the old varnish and overpainting done by other hands, the restorer may also remove some of the original as well. So, since Harrington himself attaches much importance to his version of the "real Marx" and devotes a large section of the book to this theme, it is worth looking at the restorer's

technique in some detail. Take the question of Marx's attitude toward democracy, which is crucial, as I shall argue later, to the whole question of the role of socialism today. Harrington justly points out that the much-quoted, notorious phrase about the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is usually taken out of context. It should be seen, he argues, in the wider context of Marx's general attitude toward democracy. Thus he quotes Marx writing approvingly of the 1870 Paris Commune and in particular its introduction of universal suffrage for the election of officials, who were also subject to immediate recall by the people. From this Harrington concludes that dictatorship for Marx "does not mean dictatorship but the fulfillment of democracy."

But does it? And if it does, is not the implication that Marx's idea of democracy may have been rather special? For Harrington's argument cuts a lot of corners. In the first place the unsuspecting reader may assume from Harrington's interpretation that Marx approved of the Commune. He did not. He thought it was (to quote Isaiah Berlin's classic biography) "a political blunder." It was dominated by the various left-wing revolutionary sects for whom Marx reserved his very special hatred and contempt: those whom he once described as the advocates of "mutton-headed, sentimental, utopian socialism." However, he gave the Commune his blessing because it gave the international socialist movement its heroic martyrs: fodder for the propaganda machine. Secondly, it is not at all clear what either Marx or Harrington understands by "democracy." I suspect that in fact—all honor to Harrington—their definitions would have very little in common. For Marx and the Commune must be seen in their historical perspective: the perspective of Rousseau and the

RUDOLF KLEIN's article, "Growth and Its Enemies," appeared in our June issue. Mr. Klein is a Research Associate at London University.

French Revolution, the intellectual and historical influences which did so much to mold 19th-century socialist thinking.

Rousseau disliked the word democracy and thought the ideal unattainable. The ideologues of the French Revolution, the link in the intellectual chain between Rousseau and the Communards, believed not in democracy but in the will of the people. This almost mystical concept could be used—as J. L. Talmon has shown in his *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*—to justify almost any act of crowd tyranny or the dictatorship of an elite claiming to speak for the collective mind. It is a concept which is the antithesis of democracy if by democracy we mean (among other things) the toleration of dissent and respect for minority opinions. For to tolerate dissent is to betray the general will (or the party).

In other respects, too, Harrington does not explore sufficiently the complexities and contradictions of Marx. The popular picture of Marx as the man who claimed to have discovered the "iron laws" of history may be an oversimplification. But to underplay this element is an equally misleading oversimplification. For psychologically, surely, Marx's appeal largely rests on his identification of the desirable with the inevitable. This goes a long way toward explaining Marx's reputation among the millions who have never read a word of him. Others may have had equally subtle and rewarding insights into social processes, but no one else used those insights with such force and imagination as the basis of a secular prophecy. Indeed, there is considerable evidence to suggest that this was Marx's view of himself: for example, he wanted to dedicate *Das Kapital* to Darwin—the man who had discovered the law of revolution paying homage to the man who had discovered the law of evolution.

Although Harrington rightly points out that Marx gave much greater emphasis to human freedom than the popular version of his doctrine would suggest, he ignores the other side of Marx,

which was the authoritarian welder of a revolutionary movement. The early history of the International is largely the history of Marx's complete intolerance of disagreement; like Freud, he had no time for disciples who strayed. His concern was to build an effective instrument of revolution, not a debating society for educating the masses—which is what I suspect Harrington, as a gentle and humane man, would like. If democracy means a willingness to put up with dissent, Marx was not a democrat.

HARRINGTON's attempt to reinterpret Marx is an essential part of a more ambitious exercise still: to square the ideals of humane liberalism with those of traditional socialism. It is a courageous attempt which, I think, in the end fails, just as his attempt to redraw the portrait of Marx is not convincing, despite many shrewd touches.

For what, after all, distinguishes liberalism from socialism? On the whole it is not their ideals. Most liberals and socialists would probably find little difficulty in agreeing on a common platform of general aims. To a large extent they draw on a shared vocabulary—social justice, racial equality, and all the rest. It is this which has so often made it easy for dictatorships of the Left to appeal to the more unsuspecting liberals. The difficulties come, and the splits appear, when rhetoric has to be translated into action. There may be conflicts among different aims, all desirable in themselves: the redistribution of wealth may be highly desirable on grounds of social equity but undesirable inasmuch as it limits individual liberty. Equally, there may be cases where the means chosen—the actual program adopted—may threaten some of the ends, and liberals may then part company from socialists.

The weakness of Harrington's book is that his argument tends to peter out before reaching this crucial point. Take the example, much stressed by Harrington himself, of the power exercised by private corporations. Harrington makes a twofold indictment of this power. First, he cites the example

of Britain and other European countries to argue that corporate power is used to block effective measures to redistribute wealth and eliminate poverty. This argument, when applied to Britain, is certainly an oversimplification, if not without some basis in fact; the failure of Wilson's Labour government was caused predominantly, though not exclusively, by its ineptitude in handling economic policy. To argue that it was the power of the bankers which sabotaged the Wilson administration, as Harrington comes close to doing, is to invite the counter-argument that it is the trade unions who are sabotaging the Conservative government of Edward Heath which is now being forced to abandon Tory policies quite as much as Wilson was obliged to abandon socialist policies; the balance of power is perhaps not quite as one-sided as Harrington's argument requires. Second, Harrington rightly stresses the social implications of business decisions. He argues, quite fairly, that the slogans about market forces insuring freedom of choice are empty rhetoric in that these forces may block as many choices as they open up: my freedom of choice is diminished, for example, when my favorite brand of biscuits is taken off the market.

From this double-pronged argument, Harrington concludes that the European social democrats have been wrong to abandon their traditional emphasis on the social ownership of industry. And he puts forward instead a program for socializing industry by taking over control—though the liberal in Harrington insists that this socialist aim can be achieved gradually and painlessly, for instance by introducing inheritance taxes. The trouble is that if Harrington is correct in putting so much emphasis on the power of the corporations, then surely the conventional Communist emphasis on revolutionary tactics must be right as well. If the European social democrats are wrong in believing that the aims of socialism can be achieved without changing the power structure of society (as Harrington thinks), then why assume that the power structure itself can be changed

with the consent of those who are currently in control of it?

As so often happens, Harrington here is betrayed by his own niceness. He is a revolutionary who believes in good will. But he really cannot have it both ways. If those wielding power in Western capitalist societies can be persuaded to give up that power—and this is what Harrington's scheme for more social ownership implies—then presumably they could more easily be persuaded into accepting the less painful measures involved in a program of social engineering. Even income redistribution is less threatening than property redistribution. However, Harrington is pessimistic about the chances of successfully carrying out such a program of social engineering—despite his diagnosis of an emerging social-democratic mass movement, represented by social-reform-conscious trade-unionism, in the United States. So it is all the odder that he should be hopeful about his own, far more radical program of political action. Indeed it is difficult to take Harrington seriously as an analyst of the political situation. Either he ought to be urging the people to storm the barricades of privilege and power, or he ought to rally to those who, despite defeats and disappointments, pursue the tactics of gradual melioration. As it is, Harrington gives the impression of a man who hopes that the barricades will gently crumble away under the pressure of his eloquence and the faith of the masses. He is too much of a liberal to urge revolutionary tactics and too much of a socialist to settle for liberal-reformist policies.

Again, it is worth being pedantic on some points of detail. For there is a danger that Harrington's book may reinforce the legend that the welfare-state tactics of gradual social improvement have failed. This is certainly not true of Western Europe, from which Harrington himself takes most of his examples. It is true that welfare-state policies have admittedly failed—as in Britain, frequently mentioned in the book—to eliminate poverty, slums, and inequality. But

it is the successes of the welfare state which have largely sensitized us to these failures: every advance reveals new requirements of social action which in the past would have been ignored because far more rampant evils were claiming our attention. One might even argue that one of the characteristics of a welfare-state society should be a permanent state of dissatisfaction and a continual search for improvement in social conditions—by constantly raising standards it will always fall short of its own expectations—and paradoxically, this will provide ammunition for those who want to argue that the entire approach has failed. Harrington's argument also assumes that we know how to deal with social problems, that our failures are those of will, not of comprehension. In many areas of social action, this is simply not true; we often create new social diseases in our attempts to deal with old ones. The failures of urban renewal cited by Harrington are often the result not of a lack of social planning but of planners' *hubris*: the assumption that we are in a position to calculate the consequences of all our actions.

To be fair, Harrington fully recognizes the fallacy of equating social planning with bureaucratic planning. He is aware that bringing industries into state ownership may simply mean the emergence of a more powerful bureaucracy. But, as so often in this book, after having defined difficulties with precision, he relies for their solution on verbal incantation. What does social control and social planning mean in practice? What social criteria are to be applied, and by whom? A brief reference to "cooperative and neighborhood forms of ownership" hardly answers questions like these. It is pretty clear that Harrington is as flummoxed as the rest of us when it comes to giving precise, specific meaning to the rhetoric of good intentions, and is original chiefly in his optimism.

The British experience suggests that it is easier to place industries under social ownership than to run them on any principle of social ac-

countability. As Harrington points out in a pained sort of way, the Labour government's renationalization of steel "left many of the previous managers in control of the public enterprise." Why the surprise? Given the increasing technical complexity of industry, rightly stressed by Harrington in another context, it is precisely the "previous managers" who have the required know-how—even when the nominal exploiters, the stockholders, have been expropriated, to use the Marxist jargon. The problem of accountability has exercised a number of committees of the British Parliament. The result is a shelf of reports and a series of unanswered questions. But the main conclusion, paradoxically, has been that the best form of social accountability is financial discipline: the rate of return on investment and similar capitalist indices of performance. Although Harrington advocates moving toward a moneyless economy—and is scornful of economists who insist on the importance of costs—the British experience points in the opposite direction. It is easy enough to provide some services—like health—free of charge. However, as was pointed out by Aneurin Bevan, one of the great figures of the British Labour party's left wing, priorities are the language of socialism. And determining priorities in turn means measuring the cost of alternatives. Even though Harrington sees socialism as the outcome of economic growth rather than as its cause—indeed for Harrington socialism is made possible only by affluence—it seems unlikely that any society, however prosperous, can shrug aside this sort of problem.

To talk about priorities is also to admit that there may be conflict about aims. Different groups in a society may have different demands. Somehow any social system—capitalist or socialist—has to address itself to the resolution of conflict. One man's gain in freedom may be another man's loss of liberty. Further, a balance has to be struck between what Isaiah Berlin has called negative and positive liberty; very crudely put, this means freedom from interference (the ability to do one's own thing)

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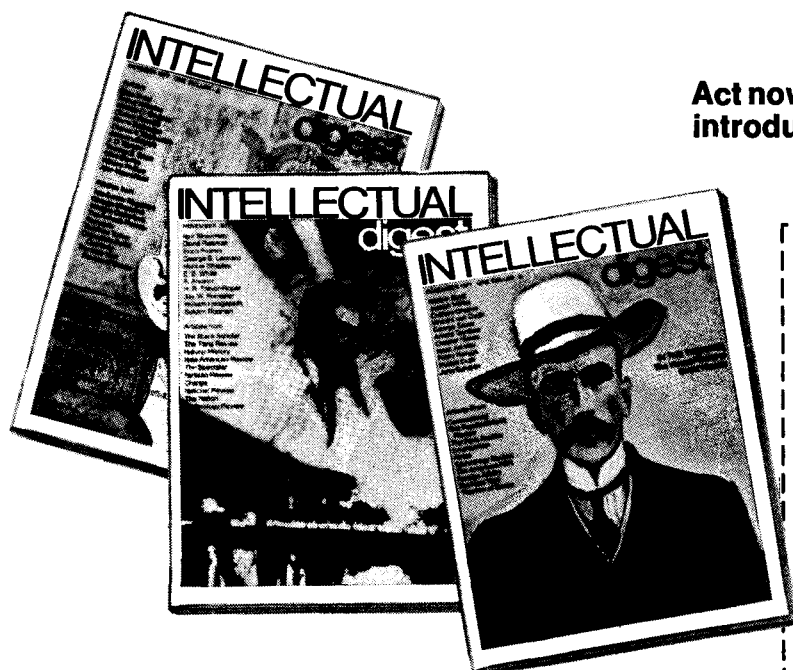
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on the one hand and freedom to carry out certain activities (which may require publicly-provided facilities) on the other. Issues like these are absolutely crucial to any discussion of what social control means in practice, but they are left untouched by Harrington. Perhaps his assumption is that conflict is a product of capitalism, which is certainly the traditional Marxist doctrine. But this is overly simple. Take the issue of a factory which is polluting the atmosphere and rivers, an example of market forces imposing extra social costs on the community. This seems a clear-cut case for limiting the freedom of the factory owner in the interests of the freedom of the community as a whole. But what if the result of curbing this freedom to pollute is to increase the cost of the product—and the product is consumed by only one group in the community? Again, a classic clash of freedoms is involved in the current American debate over school busing;* how far is the freedom of whites to be curbed in the interest of extending the freedom of blacks?

Harrington's implicit assumption in neglecting this whole area—the crucial area of political institutions and choice—seems to be that socialism in itself eradicates conflict and produces a harmonious community of interests, a latter-day version of Rousseau's general will. And it is at this point that liberals will probably part company with Harrington—despite the generous humanity of his vision. He has succeeded in demonstrating yet again that even modified capitalist societies are far from eradicating freedom from hunger, social and cultural deprivation, and a sense of powerlessness in the face of technological complexity. But he has not demonstrated, what is indeed far more difficult to demonstrate, that his brand of affluent socialism can bring all the advantages of collectivism and none of its disadvantages. The dilemma of the liberal reformer who may well share Harrington's indignation about present evils but who cannot

relax on his featherbed of optimism about a socialist future remains unsolved; the prospect still seems to be that of a dogged, long-drawn-out campaign of change—less enticing than Harrington's leap but more realistic.

Out of Court

A QUESTION OF JUDGMENT: THE FORTAS CASE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SUPREME COURT. By ROBERT SHOGAN. *Bobbs-Merrill*. 314 pp. \$10.00.

Reviewed by WALTER GOODMAN

ON THE basis of early returns the Supreme Court, which now seats four appointees of Mr. Nixon, is living up to the best hopes of one part of the citizenry and the worst expectations of another, by changing the direction of decisions in the area of criminal law. With the liberal group which dominated the Warren Court shrunk to a minority, the Justices are exhibiting greater compassion for the problems of prosecutors and not so much for the problems of defendants. For this implementation of a campaign promise Mr. Nixon owes something to Abe Fortas, Lyndon Johnson, and Louis Wolfson, the main players in *A Question of Judgment*. Robert Shogan, who covered the Supreme Court for *Newsweek* at the time of Justice Fortas's forced resignation in 1969, tells the story in a fair and coherent, if not stylish, way. His leading characters are big men, self-made, smart, manipulative, and very successful. Though the tale falls considerably short of Greek tragedy, to which some observers hastened to liken it at the time, its protagonists were in fact done in by the very qualities which had raised them so high.

Fortas received his place on the Court in 1965, in one of those fast shuffles which were second nature to his friend Lyndon Johnson. Scarcely had Adlai Stevenson been

laid to rest than Johnson was twisting the arm of Justice Arthur Goldberg to take Stevenson's uncomfortable, unrewarding, and unimportant place as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Nothing in the former President's career indicates that he held any special regard either for the United Nations or for Arthur Goldberg—but Goldberg's departure from the Court would leave open the "Jewish seat" for occupancy by Abe Fortas.

Cronyism seems to come more naturally to Democratic Presidents than to Republicans. Who can imagine Richard Nixon having a crony? Harry Truman's weakness for old pals burdened the Supreme Court with Tom Clark and Sherman Minton. In the case of Fortas, however, even conservatives did not dispute his experience of the law or the quality of his mind. Liberals were willing to overlook his late associations with big business out of consideration for his earlier defense of alleged security risks. Though there was some grumbling among Republicans over the fact that Fortas was too close to the President for their comfort, having served for a couple of decades as Johnson's confidant, front man, and intermediary in such delicate matters as those involving Bobby Baker and Walter Jenkins, his appointment went through without any difficulty whatsoever.

The President's effort in 1968 to turn Associate Justice Fortas into Chief Justice Fortas was again distinguished by the LBJ technique, and remains a revealing tale of maneuverings on the highest level of government. The project took shape under a cloud, with the confidential resignation of Chief Justice Warren, to become effective at the President's pleasure. Foreseeing that Richard Nixon, whose low opinion of the Warren Court was no secret in that election season, might soon assume the Presidency, Warren naturally preferred that his successor be named by Johnson. By leaving the precise date of his retirement open, he was putting the Senate's Republicans on notice that if they obstructed confirma-

* See Nathan Glazer's "Is Busing Necessary?" in COMMENTARY, March 1972.

WALTER GOODMAN, whose reviews and articles appear frequently in these pages, is the author of, most recently, *A Percentage of the Take*.

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Walter N. Farr, Elinor Guggenheimer, and Emanuel Tobier will be amongst our contributing editors.

Here are some of the contributors and articles we have lined up for early issues:

Can the City and State Co-Exist?

by Jewel Bellush, Professor of Political Science, Hunter College

Manhattan Without Cars?

by Harry Schwartz, Abeles/Schwartz and Associates

The Vicious Cycle of Welfare

by Elizabeth Durbin, New York University

Pollution and the High Cost of Purity

by Maurice Feldman, Former Commissioner of Water Resources, NYC

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The Future of New York As a Business Center

by Emanuel Tobier, New York University

There is no getting away from it: the common source of every NEW YORK AFFAIRS article will be the problems and issues of life in New York. On the other hand, the search for policies to deal with these problems and issues is relevant to every city in the United States. Indeed, NEW YORK AFFAIRS may well be of interest to everyone who believes in the future of the city. All cities.

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tion of whomever Johnson might choose, he, Warren, would still be on the bench. The Republicans did not miss the point, and did not take it kindly.

JOHNSON went about preparing for the elevation of Abe Fortas with the means which he had perfected in the Senate. To replace Fortas as Associate Justice, he chose an old pal, Homer Thornberry, a former Congressman whom he had already turned into a district-court judge and then into a court-of-appeals judge. Thornberry's main qualification for the high court was that he came from Texas—a distinction that Johnson hoped would please important Southern Senators who felt no particular kinship with Abe Fortas.

To pacify the Republican side, the President made a degrading deal with Minority Leader Everett Dirksen, one feature of which was the preservation of the Subversive Activities Control Board, a relic of the 1950's which had been put out of business but not out of existence by a series of court decisions. As the situation stood in 1968, if the Attorney General did not bring a case before the Board by the end of the year it was bound to expire. In consequence of the Johnson-Dirksen deal, Attorney General Ramsey Clark, renowned civil libertarian, presented the Board with seven sham cases and thus continued its useless life, and Abe Fortas, renowned adversary of subversive-hunters, was spared the opposition of Everett Dirksen.

It all went for nothing. Johnson's prestige was crumbling in 1968, and Dirksen could not keep his troops from the attack. The Senate's conservative cadre found no joy in the prospect of a Fortas Court replacing the Warren Court, and set up a determined resistance, with at least the implicit support of candidate Nixon. Fortas was vulnerable to the charge that while on the bench he had remained an intimate counselor at the White House and his testimony before a Senate committee, as Shogan reports, "left an appearance of cleverness rather than

candor"—an observation that may be applied more generally to Fortas's public performances. The revelation that the Justice had received \$15,000 from five businessmen that summer for conducting a university seminar capped the anti-Fortas campaign. The Presidential election was on everyone's mind; the Republicans and their Southern-Democratic allies mounted a filibuster against the nomination; and Everett Dirksen decided that his arrangement with the President did not require that he vote for cloture. The pleasure of filling the post of Chief Justice was left to the new President.

DID anti-Semitism figure significantly in the rejection of Abe Fortas? At one stage during the campaign for his nomination, according to Shogan, the Johnson forces spread the word that rejection would be ill interpreted by Jewish groups, so the factor of Jewishness might actually have made the opposition a bit more fastidious. One need not pretend that there are no anti-Semites in the U.S. Senate to believe that in this case the conservative coalition had sufficient cause for seeking to block Fortas's promotion without worrying about his religion.

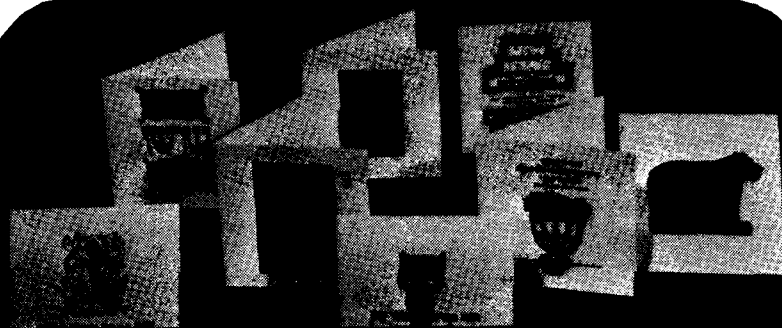
The fact that Fortas, while a Justice, would accept a substantial sum from businessmen suggests that his long career as a Washington lawyer and operator was not easily reconcilable with his new career. His salary on the Court was \$39,500 a year, about a fifth of his earnings at Arnold, Fortas & Porter. That, to be sure, was not the totality of his income. He had, as men in his position do, real-estate and stock holdings. Shogan reports that he was also getting \$50,000 a year for five years under the terms of his settlement with his law firm, and his wife, a most successful attorney, was earning upward of \$100,000 a year. But the couple lived high, and money seemed to be much on the Justice's mind. How else explain his readiness—indeed, by Shogan's account, his positive eagerness—after his appointment to the bench, to become a consultant to the Wolfson Family Foundation, a

post which carried with it few duties and \$20,000 a year for the rest of his life, and the same continuing sum to his wife after his death?

Louis Wolfson, the man with whom Justice Fortas negotiated this dreamy arrangement, was an odd one for association with a judge at any level. A known wheeler-dealer in stocks and companies whose activities had already brought him under suspicion of the SEC and would soon bring him to jail, Wolfson, like others of his temperament and specialty, was given to making friendly overtures to public figures. One never knew, after all, where influence might reside at any given time, and a modest investment might produce high returns. Or perhaps it was only his way of repairing some fearful insecurity. Whatever prompted Wolfson's fits of generosity, never had so prominent a figure as a Supreme Court Justice responded so warmly to his overtures.

Well, *Life* magazine broke the story of the Wolfson-Fortas relationship. No one charged that the Justice had actually interceded for the businessman in his troubles with the law or had done anything at all illegal, but that was not necessary. The Nixon administration had enough to force his resignation—and resign he did, after an “explanation” so evasive, not to say untruthful, that it remains today an embarrassment to read. Shogan tells this part of the story particularly well.

I HAVE heard no grieving over Abe Fortas's having to resume the practice of law in Washington, along with the cultivated, expensive, high-powered way of life for which he was known. But there has been lamentation over the fact that the Supreme Court was deprived of so brilliant a mind just at a time when Richard Nixon had the power to stock it with mediocrities. The President has left no question of his attraction to the mediocre, but Abe Fortas's mind may have suffered from an excess of brilliance, or at any rate, agility. According to Robert Shogan, it was Fortas who developed



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the theory that the way in which alleged pornography is advertised can be used to convict a distributor of material which is not in itself illegal, and so to send Ralph Ginzburg to jail. A tricky ruling, the product of a quick mind intent on creating a crime to satisfy the desire to punish. Agility taken by itself is not entirely an asset for a judge.

A Question of Justice does not tell us what makes a good judge. It does convey a notion of what makes an effective lawyer-about-Washington. Perhaps Abe Fortas simply came to the Court too late, after too many years of doing what had to be done to make a career of mediating between the rich and the powerful, and enjoying it too much. He is, undeniably, a man of varied accomplishments, but the Court was not his vocation.

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THREE DAYS AND A CHILD. By A. B. YEHOShUA. Translated by Miriam Arad. *Doubleday.* 260 pp. \$5.95.

Reviewed by HAROLD FISCH

THE new generation of Israeli writers, those who reached maturity in the period following the establishment of the state, are in some sense to be understood as reacting in their work against the values of the heroic past, as repre-

HAROLD FISCH, professor of English at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, is the author of *The Dual Image and Hamlet and the Word*.

sented by the Palmach, the Haganah, the ideology of the kibbutz, and the old ethic of salvation through labor. There is a very noticeable edge of satire in the backward glances of writers like Binyamin Tammuz and of Amos Oz, and the same is true of Aharon Megged, Yoram Kaniuk, and A. B. Yehoshua. But it would be false to conclude that these younger writers have abandoned the Zionist dream for something wider or more "universal." Robert Alter, in a valuable article in these pages on "New Israeli Fiction,"* has indicated the "generalizing perspective" and the concern with the human condition as a whole which the younger writers evince in contrast with the more limited parochial themes of their literary predecessors. Certainly the younger writers are aware of the wider setting—we live, after all, in the age of the mass media and instantaneous worldwide communication—but they are in fact as obsessively concerned as were their elders with Jewish existence, with contemporary Jewish history, and in particular with the Israeli state enterprise. All this, I would suggest, is at the center of their work even when, perhaps especially when, they seem to be reacting most strongly against it. Indeed, it is precisely in their compulsive reaction to the past, its slogans and attitudes, that they show how totally the past lives with them, whether as nightmare, as daytime obsession, or as folly to be scorned through long pages of anguish.

Jonas, the hero of Aharon Megged's novel, *Living on the Dead*, is a young writer in thrall to the Zionist past represented by Davidov, legendary pioneer and nation-builder whose biography he has been commissioned to write. He has signed a contract committing him to this task and he sets about it by methodically retracing the career of the dead man, at the same time compulsively reenacting

* June 1969. Mr. Alter's article, it should be noted, also includes an extended discussion of Amos Oz's popular and esteemed novel, *My Michael*, recently issued in an English translation (by Nicholas de Lange, in collaboration with the author), Knopf, 287 pp., \$6.95.

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some details of it in his own life. But the biography will never be written. Jonas's attitude to history is, to say the least, ambivalent. From time to time he seeks oblivion and escape from his responsibilities in the "Cellar," a place of convivial resort for the bohemia of Tel Aviv. And in the end he does succeed in losing the notes and documents which he has so laboriously collected. But history will not be mocked. As we see him at the end of the novel, Jonas is awaiting trial for breach of contract, and "so long as this trial hangs over my head, I cannot start anything new."

I have already had occasion to describe *Living on the Dead* as a "Dybbuk" story, one calling to mind the archetypal theme of the figure of the living haunted by the spirit of the dead which occurs in so much Romantic and post-Romantic literature of the past century.* From this point of view the novel can be said to be in the symbolic mode. But the symbolism, though clear, is far from wooden; *Living on the Dead* is an absorbing and vivid representation of Israeli life in the 60's, and its descriptive truth is never overthrown by the weight of an artificial symbolic structure.

The same cannot be said of Yoram Kaniuk's more ambitious novel, *Adam Resurrected*, which deliberately lurches into a surrealist world somewhat resembling that of Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*. Adam, the larger-than-life hero, is a fabulous personality endowed with supernatural gifts. He too cannot throw off the weight of his obsessive memories—in his case it is the memory of the Holocaust when, as an inmate of a Nazi concentration camp, he had been forced to act the part of a dog for the amusement of the camp commandant. In this role he had also been ordered to clown for the Jews on their way to the gas chambers, and he had even "entertained" his own wife and daughter in their last moments. Adam hastens to forget all this, but the past will not long be repressed and it eventually overwhelms the balance of his mind. The main scenes of the novel take

place in an extravagantly conceived mental institution situated in the Judean desert. In this strange location, and with the help of a somewhat too ostentatious apparatus of symbolism and grotesquerie, Kaniuk steers his hero through to an apparent purgation.†

Kaniuk manages to project a panoramic vision of Israel, its institutions and leaders, as well as its well-wishers abroad, all of whom are viewed in a wildly satiric light and all of whom are somehow linked with the central symbolism of the mental hospital. The novel is something of a tour de force—the resurrection of Adam, I suppose, being intended to suggest the recuperative possibilities of man in general as well as of the particular specimen of *homo sapiens* produced by Jewish history. But ultimately the bravura effects wear thin and the symbolism becomes too contrived. It must also be said that Kaniuk does not appear utterly serious about the problems he raises, seeming to be

more interested in his own pyrotechnics than in his theme.

ONE of the most serious Israeli writers of the present generation, by contrast, is A. B. Yehoshua, who is fortunately also a most competent storyteller. Yehoshua lacks as yet the epic range, but the remarkable gift displayed so far in his short fiction holds within it a brilliant promise. The title story in

* "The Figure of the Dybbuk," COMMENTARY, April 1971.

† I might note that another Israeli writer, Yehuda Amichai, in a similarly conceived but more tightly controlled novel, *Not of This Time: Not of This Place* (Harper & Row, 1968), has also explored the theme of the Israeli weighed down by obsessive memories of the Holocaust. He too suggests a kind of catharsis as his hero returns from abroad to the somber realities of the historical present, and he has a scene or two as well in a mental hospital. All of this calls to mind the early-20th-century Hebrew writer, Y. H. Brenner, whose novel *Breakdown and Bereavement*—recently published by Cornell University Press, in a fine translation by Hillel Halkin—likewise touches on the theme of mental disorder.

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The Jewish Bund in Russia from Its Origins to 1905

Henry J. Tobias

In the late nineteenth century a small group of Jewish Social Democrats in Russia set in motion a movement that was to become one of the most dynamic elements in the struggle against the Tsarist autocracy. The organization they formed was known as the Jewish Bund—the most effective and for many years the only organization active among Jewish workers. From an origin in isolated, secret groups of a local character, the Bund evolved into a cohesive, highly organized party that greatly influenced economic and political events. In this first history of the Bund in English, the author describes not only its internal organization and tactics, but also its relations with other political forces, notably the Zionists, the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks, and the Polish revolutionary parties, and its relations with antagonistic elements in the Jewish community.

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the present collection, "Three Days and a Child," reads at one level as though it had been written as a model for the delectation of structural analysts. It opens on a note of dilemma. The narrator, Dov, a research student in mathematics at the Hebrew University who has long loved a kibbutz girl but has failed to win her, cannot solve a quadrilateral equation on which his university thesis depends; and the story, constructed with a kind of mathematical precision, is in some way an attempt to solve the equation. It sets up a series of dialectical and parallel relationships among the characters, each of whom has a different professional and avocational interest. Dov (mathematics) loves Haya (vines/fertility) but is actually living with Yael (dryness/thistles), while Haya is married to Zeev (a weeder of thistles). Zvi (snakes and insects) is in love with Yael but separated from her by Dov, just as Dov is separated from Haya by Zeev. There is, in fact, a perfect balance of unresolved tensions. Into the center of this tangle is injected Yahli, the three-year-old child of Haya, whom the narrator is asked to look after for three days. He is overcome with love for the child in whom he sees the image of the mother, but he also dreams fantastically of the boy's death as a means of revenge on Haya.

IN PURSUIT of this object Dov drags the child through the fierce meridian heat of Jerusalem in sickness and mortal danger. The Jerusalem of dryness, rockiness, menace, and death (the time is pre-1967, when the guns of the Arab Legion stand poised over the Jewish city) is contrasted with the fertile countryside from which Haya derives. But Jerusalem will reveal its "secret fertility" when, on the final day of the story, summer wonderfully gives way to autumn and at that precise moment the narrator breaks out of the love/hate syndrome. Compassion for his friend Zvi who has been bitten by a snake marks a turning-point. Zvi gets to the hospital in time, the child's fever drops to normal, there is a fountain of tears, a memory

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of love, and a release of Dov's imagination and sympathy—in short, a return to life-affirming values. Dov inhales the odors which Yahli has left behind as though he were “a father intoxicated with his first child.” And even in the dry thistles which Yael has left in their apartment he finds at the end a hidden core of fertility.

YEHOSHUA's story “Facing the Forests,” also included in the present collection, has been much criticized in Israel as a gratuitous offense to the whole Zionist state enterprise. Its hero-narrator is a frustrated intellectual, a failed scholar (a kind of brother to Dov) who, when placed in charge of a forest planted by the Jewish National Fund on the ruins of an abandoned Arab village, stands idly by and even rejoices as a crazed Arab laborer “takes a firebrand and rushes through the trees like an evil spirit.” From one point of view, the tale can indeed be regarded as a nihilistic work; considered in its larger implications, however, it tells the same story as Megged's *Living on the Dead*. It speaks of obsessive responsibility (fire-watching), of fatal and debilitating inadequacy (the failed scholar), of menace and hate (the fire in the eyes of the Arab, the fire in the forest). Nor is the link between the narrator and the Arab any simple matter: through it runs a madness and pain going back to the period of the Crusades when both Arabs and Jews suffered at the hands of the Christian invader. Of course, it need hardly be said that Yehoshua no more approves of putting JNF forests to the torch than he does of letting little children get bitten by poisonous snakes; but he does have nightmares about both, and he seeks to resolve those nightmares by the means available to the imagination.

Yet the controversy over the real “meaning” of Yehoshua's stories—especially insofar as they seem to have disturbing social implications—is itself indicative of the deeply “relevant” quality of contemporary Israeli fiction even at its most abstract or symbolic level. Israeli writers, no matter how they may

strive for the Kafkaesque effect, cannot successfully achieve the kind of symbolic autonomy that is the mark of Kafka's genius (unless they are willing, like Kaniuk, to sacrifice narrative and psychological plausibility altogether). In the world of a Kafka story the specific subject matter is transformed by the imagination into a kind of literary Esperanto, a universal language of symbolic signs and patterns. But in the best Israeli fiction these signs and patterns, however abstractly they may be interpreted (as for instance in another Yehoshua story, “Flood Tide”), are nevertheless inescapably weighted with Jewish history and with Jewish historical consciousness. Throughout the work of writers like Amos Oz, A. B. Yehoshua, Aharon Megged, and others, there runs a sense of tragic responsibility, of a task to be discharged, and of dangers threatening the accomplishment of the task from within and from without. It is this existential condition which writers like Yehoshua make real. To expect something more universal is to expect too much—or perhaps too little.

Philosophy of Politics

CRISES OF THE REPUBLIC. By HANNAH ARENDT. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich*. 240 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by KATHLEEN NOTT

JOURNALISTIC opinion in Britain (where this reviewer lives) about American policies abroad is divided to the point of faction, not least about America in Vietnam and what she is doing there and why. Some of these judgments, pro or anti, are emotive and overtly partisan; others are uttered by professional commentators on politics and ought to be, and often appear to be, informed.

The question—and it is one compelled by the profoundly interesting and penetrating essays collected in Hannah Arendt's *Crises of the Republic*—is: What are they informed about? Whoever, and

KATHLEEN NOTT is the author of, among other works, *Philosophy and Human Nature*, *The Emperor's Clothes*, and *A Soul in the Quad*.



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however many, may buy and read Miss Arendt's book in America, it should be presented free to all outsiders. For I doubt that any of them are talking about the same America that Miss Arendt sees or the real America at all—whether they adhere to the opinion that America is our only bulwark against Communism, or whether they still believe that America is the spearhead of world imperialism against small emergent or re-emergent nations.

To this outsider at least—sometimes prone to generalize on the anti-imperialist platform—Miss Arendt's book presents a conviction of the real that is entirely new and illuminating. It is a philosophy of American politics as they are, and as they have evolved, which is indissolubly bound to immediacy—to the awareness and balanced evaluation of those most striking current events and actions in which others find only alarm and disorder but in which Miss Arendt finds meaning and connection. And—something we have no reason to expect, considering the caustic and despairingly school-marmish tongue with which Miss Arendt can lash the age—it even leaves us with a glimmer of hope for the future, for a possible rehabilitation after prolonged tribulation.

This faint hope (expressed in the final piece, "Thoughts on Politics and Revolution," based on an interview with a German writer in 1970) is that the "council" system of direct participation in government, which has arisen after every revolution including the American, might one day come to fruition and catch on in the rest of the world: grass-roots combined with inter- (not supra-) nationalism. The hope so far has always failed but, like Tocqueville, Miss Arendt hints that it is most likely to be fostered in the American capacity for voluntary association. The Mayflower Compact was the nearest thing we have seen to a genuine Social Contract or are likely to see. She quotes Locke on the Social Contract—"In the beginning all was America."

Nevertheless, the bulk of the book describes how America too has forgotten herself and her be-

ginnings: and as far as these positive prognostications, mainly at the end of the book, are concerned, we feel that the interviewer has got Miss Arendt with her back to the wall and is forcing her to stand and deliver them. But that is the common situation in which profound political analysts find themselves; it is as if their examination had actually taken the world to pieces and they were charged to put it together again.

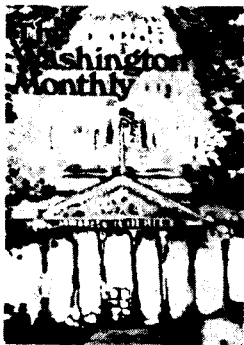
Yet if we take the whole book, not certainly as a mere American commentary, not even as a psychology of American politics, but as a philosophy of political human nature in general, we can find much to warn us, indeed to alarm us, but also a clear-sighted and coherent diagnosis of the intellectual errors and sophistries which beset us in so many interlocking fields. Thus Miss Arendt detects and assails a contemporary neo-scholasticism which infests all our thinking, but is most insidious and dangerous when it invades political and military administration because there an abstract pseudo-science masquerades as hard-headed realism, quite literally down-to-earth. (How many megadeaths can dance on a sub-atomic particle?)

The opening essay on "Lying in Politics" discusses the revelations of the Pentagon Papers. It centers on the question, how *could* they? (the President's advisers and problem-solvers)—and might well have sounded simply aghast. In fact, it soberly reveals just *how* they could: they could, and did—by taking off on that neo-scholastic tangent from reality.

To an outsider, the administrative schizophrenia which allowed think-tank advisers to calculate victory in Vietnam by ignoring the factual and gloomy reports of their own agents on the ground seems unaccountable. Miss Arendt herself does not wholly account for it—at least not enough to alleviate completely her own bewilderment—although the whole book is in a way an attempt to do so, to show how it came about that the administration was so smitten with an abstract image of being the most powerful nation on earth that it misunderstood the sources and wasted the resources of real power.

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She almost makes one believe that she would have welcomed a little genuine imperialism as being more natural and human!

But she does not look for explanation in personalities and individuals, any more than, on the other hand, she accepts the materialistic theory of history. It is the ideas and their interpretations that have gone wrong, with the evil assistance of a scientific and technological bedazzlement to which specialist experts are peculiarly liable, although the symptoms belong to a common and recognizable intellectual syndrome. They include the belief that assiduous fact-gathering will spontaneously generate a true theory; and indeed that you can't have too many fact-piles. (Miss Arendt points out that you can—so many in fact that, as in the Pentagon Papers case, no one has time to read them all.) What results is too often a spreading split between theory and practice. There is also the "Oedipus-effect," to which Miss Arendt refers, by which abstract prophecy or prediction actually invents the future (as with some social and psychological schools).

Miss Arendt does not think much of the social sciences which, with Noam Chomsky, she regards as copying the verbal structure but not the substance of the true sciences. Schoolmen again! And she does not think that tank-thinkers really think, because the problems they "solve" are already at a second stage of abstraction from the real. Thus she is against all ideologies as such. But "ideology" is not just a term of abuse, it is used to mark the point where behavior or generalizations, which may have begun as realistic or natural or referential, start to take off.

In the very able and illuminating essay "On Violence," which is a semantic exploration of the distinctions among "violence," "power," "authority," and so on, this discrimination between ideology and reality is very clearly marked. Power is the human reality, and while real it has no need of violence; power and violence are almost contradictions in terms. But "power becomes impotent" when it is not based on the "tacit consent," the *consensus univer-*

salis, of the people. And in that case she agrees with Conor Cruise O'Brien that "sometimes violence is the only way of ensuring a hearing for moderation." Many of the student demonstrations, for example, have been limited to reformist and modest aims. But with the incitements to violence of the New Left or, for example, Sartre's celebration of violence as an instrument of creative change, violence itself falls into ideological abstraction and, she believes, defeats its own end, or more likely never begins to recognize its end, which realistically can only be active and universal participation in power.

In her relentless attack on abstraction she directs some of her sharpest words at liberal idealists for the way they preach school integration while often opting out of its less agreeable consequences into the privilege of private schools for their own young. On the other hand, she slams them too for capitulating to the demands of black students for "courses in Swahili and other nonexistent subjects."

It is always easier to diagnose than to cure, and this is as true of Miss Arendt's book as of any other deep political analysis. She certainly appears to believe, however grudgingly, that the American revolutionary Constitution itself contains the possibilities—though dormant—of a realistic and humane future. But of course these need to be elicited, understood, and fostered. Her appeal, then, is ultimately to the reasonableness, realism, and educability of the average human being, the old and common hope of liberal thinkers.

Radical Untruth

NINE LIES ABOUT AMERICA. By ARNOLD BEICHMAN. *Library Press*. 314 pp. \$7.95.

Reviewed by SAMUEL MCCracken

EXCEPT in rather special circles, self-flagellation has never been considered one of the more wholesome experiences life has to offer.

SAMUEL MCCracken will be living in England next year working on a book on "pop intellect."

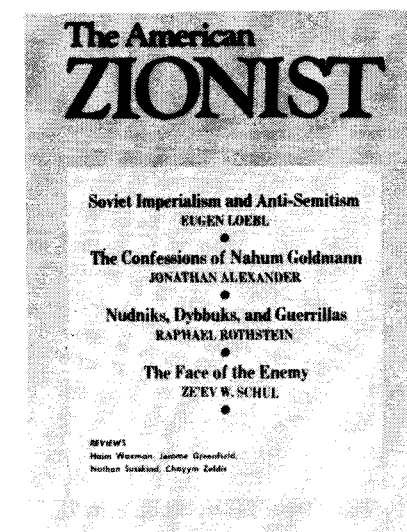
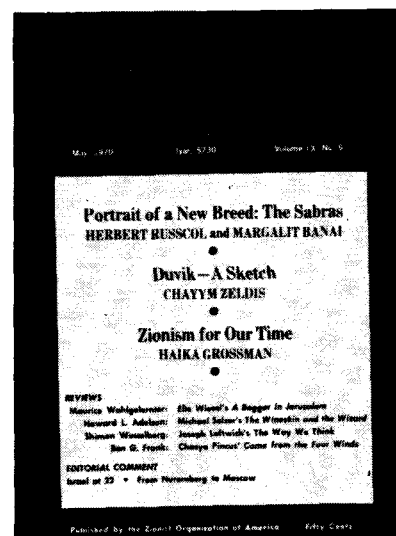
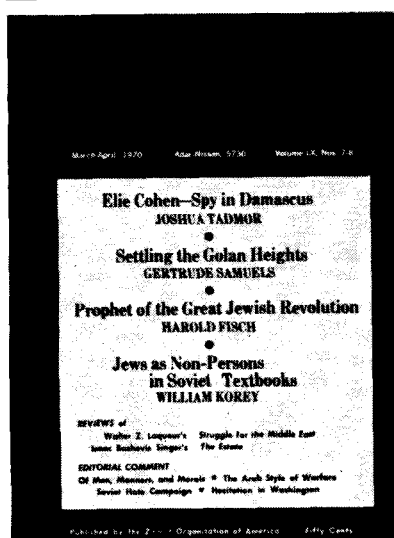
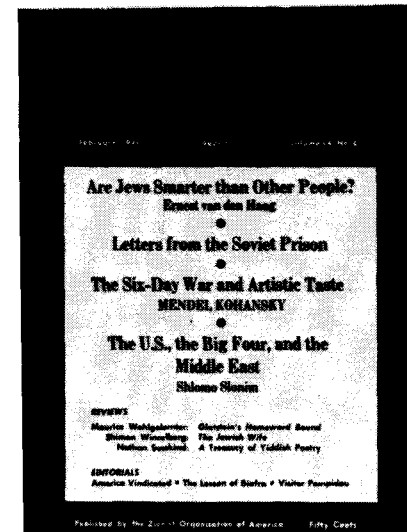
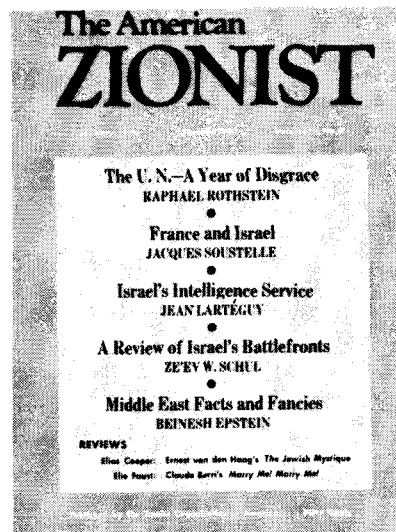
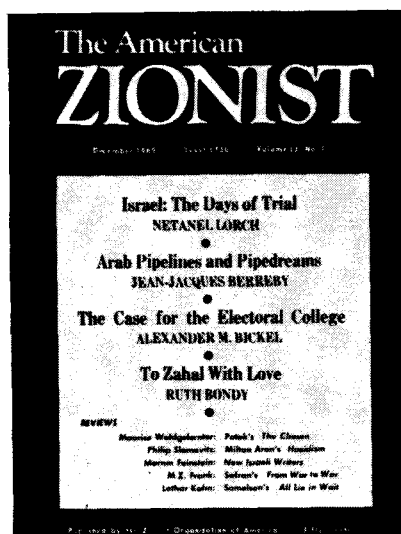
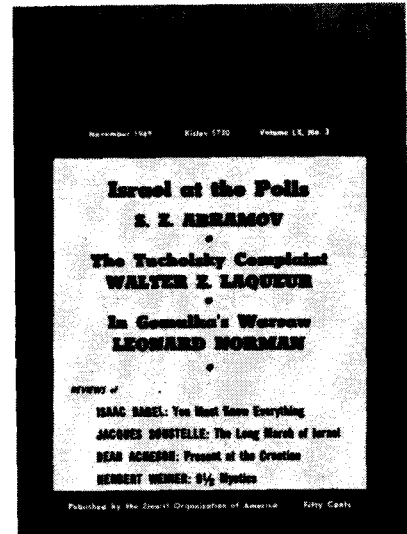
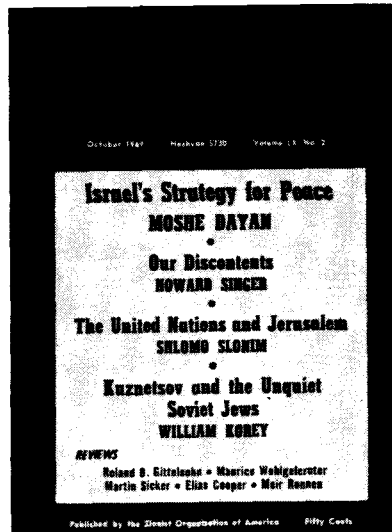
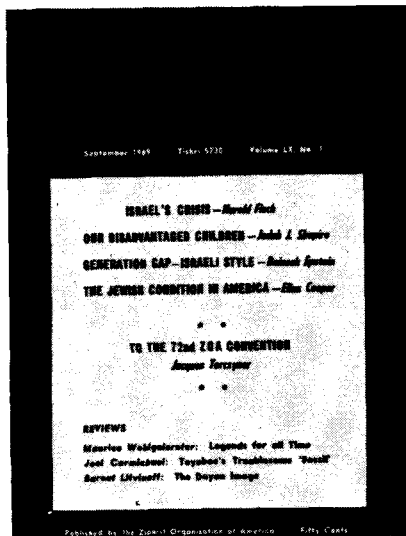
But at least it may be said of the self-flagellant that having recognized himself as the object of his hatred, he turns animus against object in quite a direct and open fashion. Now, the sort of communal self-flagellation which has come to typify so much public discourse in this country (besides demonstrating once more that behavior unpleasant in the individual is not improved by becoming communal) lacks even this perverse candor, for they who flog America flog other men's backs: even as they proclaim the sinfulness of We, we know, and they know we do, that they really mean They.

Into the midst of the sacred rites of what has become a new secular religion bursts now the unbeliever Arnold Beichman with an angry book that is devastating in its exposure of the irrationality which has gripped a large segment of the intellectual and academic communities today. We are being told, Beichman says, nine lies about America: that it is fascist; that it is genocidal; that its bomber Left is a moral force; that its workers are honkies; that its political system is a fraud; that its values are materialistic; that it is insane; that it is guilty; and that it needs a violent revolution—as indeed it would if the first eight propositions were true.

The charge that America is fascist or proto-fascist Beichman refutes in a solid analysis which demonstrates, point by point, that none of the attributes of a fascist system can be found in the United States. To get around the embarrassment this poses, the ideologues who would have it that we live under a fascist system concoct such ludicrous notions as "friendly fascism," or "democratic fascism." Deprived thus of its content, "fascist" becomes no more than a convenient term of opprobrium.

Beichman's analysis of the genocide lie is less successful. While making clear the damage to thought involved in extending the term into the realms of the psychological and the cultural, he perhaps goes too far in the other direction, resting his case almost entirely on a refutation of the charge that the police of America have conspired to wipe out the

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Black Panthers. But the charge of genocide against America goes well beyond the Panther question. Beichman does not deal with the American treatment of Indians, blacks, and Vietnamese, three groups toward whom this country is often alleged to be genocidal. One does not need to agree with such allegations (as I do not, save in the case of the Indians), to see that they present a more substantial problem than that of the Panthers, and are a good deal less easy to dispose of.

The problem of the bomber Left leads Beichman into further difficulties. His discussion amply proves that leftists countenance from other leftists behavior they will not tolerate from rightists, but what else is new? Besides, the moral content of a bomb is more perplexing than he makes out. The classic way to distinguish among political bombers has to do with assessing the legitimacy of the government against which they hurl their bombs. While my own rather limited experience with violent activists suggests that for many of them violence in itself is indeed the goal, I am convinced that some really believe they are rebelling against an illegitimate government, and see themselves as a sort of *maquis*. That they believe this does not say much for their intelligence, but it does not of itself discredit their moral purpose. The sin of their adult admirers consists not in inventing good intentions for them, but in assuming that good intentions justify violent means.

THERE are problems of a different sort in Beichman's refutation of the charge that the American worker is a honky. The sensational form of the charge, however snappy as a chapter heading, would if confronted directly lead Beichman into arguing with a particularly mindless bit of jargon, and so he transforms it for the purposes of discussion into the charge that the American worker is politically reactionary. His response is twofold: that leftists, from Marx on, have always said this about the proletariat, and that as a matter of fact, they aren't so far wrong: the proletariat is not a revolutionary

class, and in Beichman's view, should not be one.

This answer is all very well from a liberal perspective, but it does not really deal with the radical's disillusion with the worker. Nor does Beichman take up the more plausible charge that the working classes tend to be racist. However, as to the snobbism of spoiled elitists turning in revulsion from the disgusting style of life of a bourgeoisified proletariat, Beichman is properly acid, both here and in his response to the notion that American values are "materialist." He is properly acid too in his reply to the claim that the American political system is a fraud, pointing out, among other things, that most of those who most loudly make this claim against two-party democracy rarely have any qualms about one- and no-party systems.

The twin notions that America is insane and that the whole country is guilty Beichman attributes to a desire so to discredit the present culture as to make *anything* else seem preferable. The star of these sections is Professor Philip Slater, formerly of Brandeis, and the author of the following statement:

If the old culture is not rejected then its adherents must be prepared to accept a bloodbath such as has not been seen in the United States since the Civil War, for genocidal weapons will be on one side and unarmed masses on the other.

Reacting to such nonsense, Beichman comes near despair:

... one must ask in sadness, and even desperation, whether a country and its culture can survive such a decadent onslaught on thought and rationality.

Beichman's final, and longest, chapter, dealing with the claim that America needs a violent revolution, is perhaps supererogatory once he has disposed of the preceding eight "lies." His position—supported with abundant examples and quotations from a very wide range of sources—is clear enough: violent revolutions do more harm than good, are eventually betrayed, and intellectuals go on forever justifying their ex-

cesses in terms of the good times just around the corner.

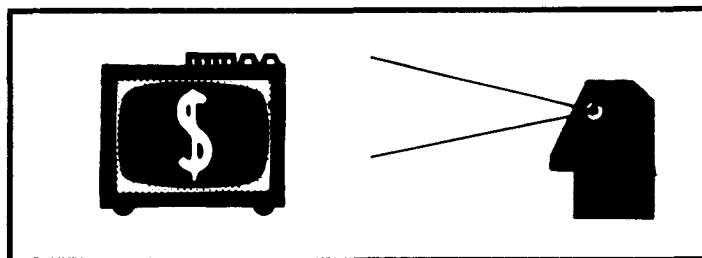
In short: Beichman has looked at our society and has seen that it is not as it has been described by those who have lately been describing it. This may seem an easy enough thing to do, but in a time when so much cultural reinforcement comes from seeing America as the hysterics do, it takes uncommon strength of mind and of character to give them the lie. At the same time, however, Beichman's reliance on the idea of the lie is itself the source of the book's major weakness. For often he is exposing not willful misstatements of fact—which is what I take a lie to be—but rather inadequate or irrational interpretations, and sometimes these interpretations are not so much even irrational as based on values with which he disagrees.

Having, moreover, charged the intellectuals of the radical Left with lying, Beichman seems more or less content to leave their motivations unexplored. He concludes with a quotation from Nietzsche which hints at the problem:

The most common lie is that which one lies to oneself; lying to others is relatively an exception. Now this wishing-not-to see what one does see, this wishing not to see *as* one sees, is almost the first condition for all those who are *party* in any sense; of necessity, the party man becomes a liar. . . .

While this is certainly on the right track in seeing the lie as self-directed, less satisfactory is the idea that lies of the sort Beichman is dealing with can be derived entirely from the spirit of party. For those who lie the most nowadays are at once comparatively non-partisan and typically failing of loyalty to any institution less ephemeral than a public meeting or a strike community. The madness which has seized so large a fraction of the academy (and an ominously larger fraction of its aspirants) still shrieks aloud for explanation. What Beichman has accomplished is what had to be done first: he has identified the irrational behavior and excoriated it. What remains now is to account for it.

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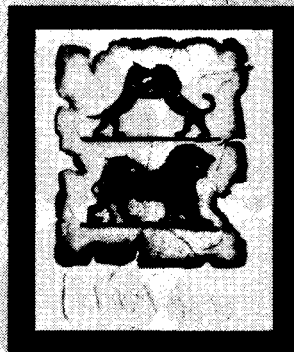
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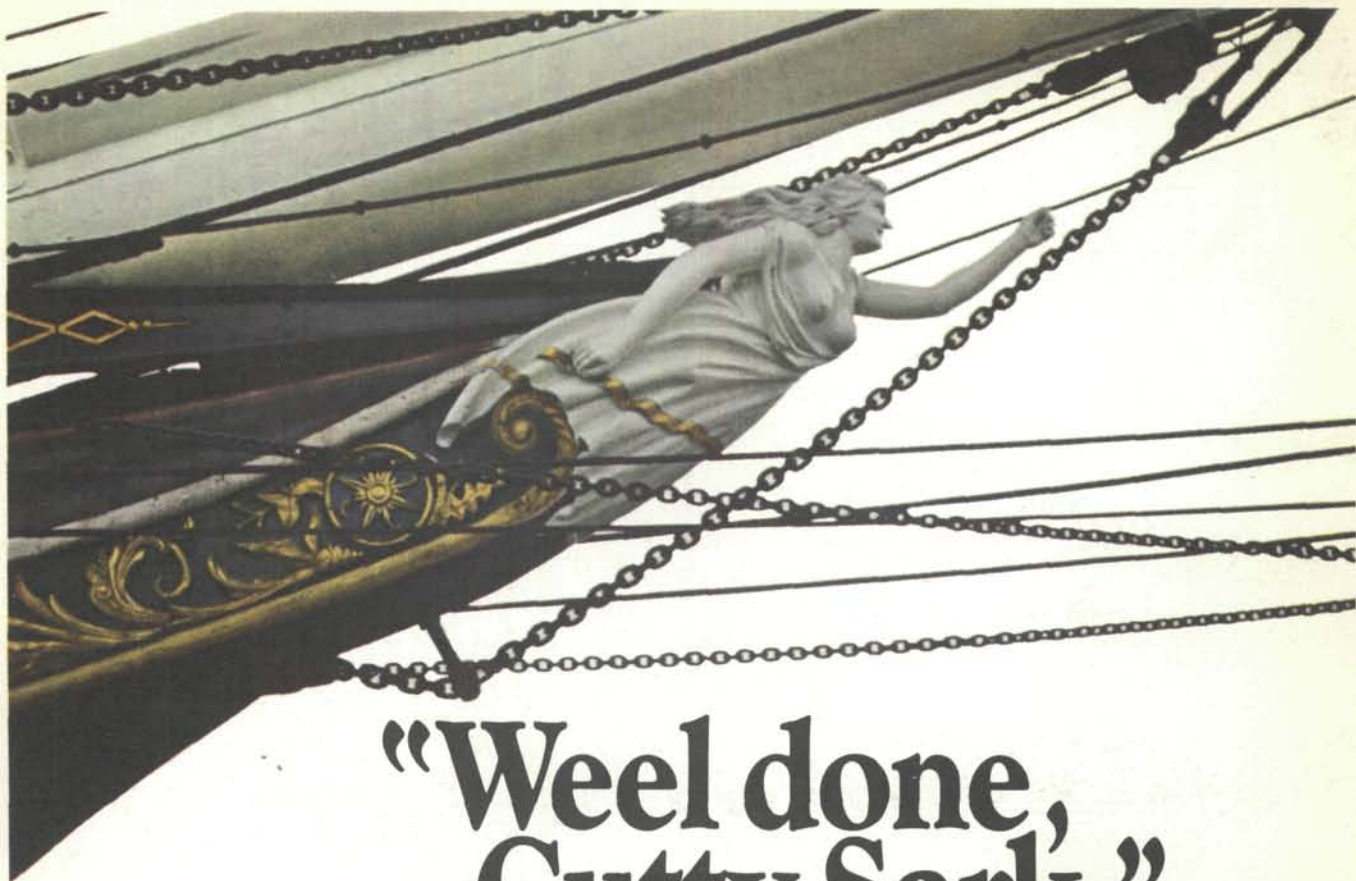
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